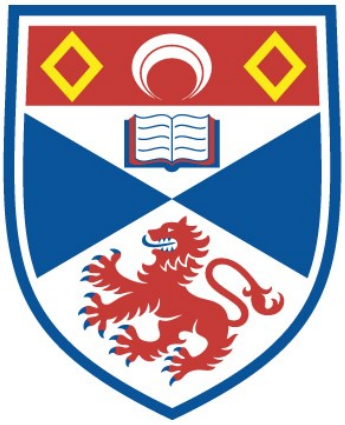
MARTYRDOM AND SELF-SACRIFICE IN THE CATHOLIC NOVELS OF GRAHAM GREENE

Donald R. Hugue

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



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ABSTRACT

The religious acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, rarely identified or discussed in works of criticism on Graham Greene's fiction, play a significant role both as a central theme and as a climactic action in his Catholic novels. Greene utilizes these sacrificial acts as the means to reveal the complex and often paradoxical nature of his characters in their relationship to God and to men. In his pre-Vatican II novels, Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair, and in his post-Vatican II novels, The Honorary Consul and Monsignor Quixote, the challenging demands of the call to self-sacrifice and martyrdom not only represent a key religious theme but also shape the essential dramatic conflict in the crisis of faith that ensnares his characters. It is precisely from the personal decision to accept or reject the call to perform the acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom that Greene's characters evolve and his narratives attain their metaphysical dimension. The unique response of each character to this call of grace to self-sacrifice becomes the climactic act of his or her human experience of faith as well as the action that unifies all of Greene's themes concerning the predicament of mankind in a fallen world. This thesis analyses both the personal response of the characters as it is conditioned by their particular situations, and the recurring elements of vocation, freedom, love and the imitation of Christ that become apparent in each case.

Declarations

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I, Donald R. Hogue, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately fifty-five thousand words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 on 1 October 1985 and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil. (Mode A), on 1 October 1985; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1985 and 1986.

Date: 28/9/86 Signature of Candidate:_

Certificate

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I hereby certify that the candidate has fufilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate to the degree of M.Phil. (Mode A) of the University of St. Andrews and that he is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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Introduction

Any crisis of faith, in literature and in life, ultimately demands a total sacrifice of the self to God. This act of self-sacrifice plays an important, indeed predominant role, both as a central theme and a climactic action, in Graham Greene's Catholic novels. In his pre-Vatican II novels, Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair, and in his post-Vatican II novels The Honorary Consul and Monsignor Quixote, Greene portrays the acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom with an intensity and insight that recall the fiction of François Mauriac and George Bernanos in France and Flannery O'Connor in America. Like his foreign contemporaries, and more than any other English novelist, he explores the profound significance of man's total renunciation of the self before God as the supreme expression of love. Greene utilizes the religious acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom as vehicles to reveal the complex and often paradoxical nature of man's mysterious relationship to God and to the incarnate image of God, his fellow man. What Kenneth Allott and Mariam Farris have identified as Greene's "obsessional" themes motivated by his "terror of life", [1] the themes of betrayal and responsibility, pity and love, sin and grace, and the recurrent motif of pursuit on the temporal and spiritual levels, culminate and find their most poignant expression in the humble acceptance or prideful rejection of the divine call to self-sacrifice and martyrdom by the major characters of his Catholic novels. It is through a study of the various ways Greene portrays this personal and

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1 Kenneth Allott and Mariam Farris, The Art of Graham Greene (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), pp. 14-15.

climactic act of faith that one achieves a deeper understanding of his characters and themes. This thesis, therefore, attempts to analyse the process and effects of the acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in Greene's Catholic novels from both a literary and a religious perspective. It tries to demonstrate how these acts are not only central to the meaning of the works, but also how they form the essential, dramatic conflict in each novel from which the characters develop.

Before one can begin speaking of Greene's Catholic novels, one must in some way identify what is meant by that ambiguous and often misleading qualifier, "Catholic". Greene's denunciation of the claim that he is a Catholic writer is well known. In an interview, recorded in The Other Man, he reiterates his argument:

> "My books only reflect faith or the lack of faith, with every possible nuance in between. I don't see why people insist on labelling me a Catholic writer. I'm simply a Catholic who happens to write....There does exist a pattern in my carpet constituted by Catholicism, but one has to stand back in order to make it out."[2]

His refutation of the title "Catholic writer" may indeed be valid. Greene is a prolific writer and many of his works, though they may contain religious themes, are not specifically concerned with the Catholic faith.[3] But, on the other hand, the interpretation of "Catholic" fiction is often too narrowly confining and misleading. A Catholic novel is not necessarily one that attempts to propagate the

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2 Marie-Francois Allain, The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene (London: The Bodley Head, 1983), p. 159.

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3 Grahame Smith also writes that Greene's objection to the title may be motivated by his fear of "finding himself consigned to that world of oddities he sees inseparable from the English Catholic tradition". The Achievement of Graham Greene (Sussex: The Harvester Press; New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1986), p. 71.

faith. On the contrary, the Catholic novel is one that points to an expanded vision of the natural world, not through orthodox statements of theology and dogma, but through the depiction of the concrete, human experience of man living and struggling with his faith or with his disbelief. Flannery O'Connor, one of the most insistent writers on this interpretation of Catholic fiction, writes,

> If I had to say what a "Catholic novel" is, I could only say that it is one that represents reality adequately as we see it manifested in this world of things and human relationships. Only in and by these sense experiences does the fiction writer approach a contemplative knowledge of the mystery they embody.
>
> ...and yet all of reality is the potential kingdom of Christ, and the face of the earth is waiting to be recreated by his spirit. This all means that what we roughly call the Catholic novel is not necessarily about a Christianized or Catholicized world, but simply that it is one in which the truth as Christians know it has been used as a light to see the world by. This may or may not be a Catholic world, and it may not have been seen by a Catholic.[4]

O'Connor's definition comes very close to Greene's own approach in his Catholic novels. It is not Catholicism or Catholics that he is intent on depicting, but realistic individuals trapped in a fallen world, who find a possible means of escape in their vision of faith. The concrete reality of man's evil as a vital force contending against, not good, but a faith that demands one's disinterested love and total selflessness, becomes the basic conflict from which the supernatural dimension arises in his novels. Concluding his argument against the notion of a Catholic literature, Greene reveals that it is the human experience of faith in a hostile, unbelieving world, rather than faith itself, that interests him:

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4 Flannery O'Connor, "Catholic Novelists and Their Readers", Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), pp. 172-3.

> "Cardinal Newman, whose books influenced me a great deal after my conversion, denied the existence of a 'Catholic' literature. He recognized only the possibility of a religious dimension superior to the literary dimension, and he wrote that books ought to deal first of all with what he called...'the tragic destiny of man in his fallen state'. I agree with him. It is the 'human factor' that interests me, not apologetics."[5]

Though the portrayal of the "human factor" in faith, of man's personal struggle with his religious vision as it confronts his fallen nature, is Greene's intention in his fiction, it is precisely the perspective given by the Catholic faith that provides the framework for this struggle. Contrary to Greene's claim, the Catholic "pattern" of his narratives is clearly evident in the six novels examined in this thesis, and the dominance of this pattern leads one to a workable definition of Catholic fiction. These novels are "Catholic" in the sense that they employ the dogma and beliefs, symbols and rites of the Catholic religion as the context for the elucidation of the predicament of modern man torn between his spiritual awareness and the presence of evil in and around him. The theology and doctrines of Catholicism become the limiting structure, or "points of reference",[6] in the novels with which the major characters interact and from which they evolve, developing their own personal faiths and ethics. Catholic orthodoxy and propaganda are never the issue in these novels. As David Lodge summarizes:

> ...in Greene's fiction Catholicism is not a body of belief requiring exposition and demanding categorical assent or dissent, but a system of concepts, a source of situations, and a reservoir of symbols with which he can order and dramatize certain intuitions about the nature of human

5 Allain, The Other Man, p. 160.

6 Ibid., p. 159.

experience...[7]

The main conflict in each novel lies in the central character's acceptance of or rebellion against his vision of faith, and in his interpretation and understanding of the demands this faith makes of him. His actions become significant because they are influenced in some way by the spirit and beliefs of the Catholic faith. Greene's novels, therefore, are not Catholic because they contain Catholic characters or make overt references to Catholicism, but because their narratives are dependent upon their characters' active response to a Catholic vision of the world. Without the Catholic "points of reference" or perspectives that make up Greene's narrative "carpet", these novels would lack their central conflict and meaning, as well as their intense drama. Through his use of Catholicism as a framework for attitudes, beliefs and actions, Greene enables his novels to retain both their natural realism and their spiritual mystery. He has achieved that "added dimension" which Flannery O'Connor saw as the goal of the fiction writer.[8]

The personal crisis of faith, which the major characters experience in these six Catholic novels, forms the central conflict of the plot. This crisis climaxes at the moment of their decision to sacrifice themselves wholly to God or to retain their autonomous and separate identity apart from God. The acts of self-sacrifice or

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7 David Lodge, "Graham Greene", The Novelist at the Crossroads, and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 89.

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8 As O'Connor writes, "A belief in fixed dogma cannot fix what goes on in life or blind the believer to it. It will, of course, add a dimension to the writer's observation...and what the Catholic writer and reader will have to remember is that the reality of the added dimension will be judged in a work of fiction by the truthfulness and wholeness of the natural events presented." "The Church and the Fiction Writer", Mystery and Manners, p. 150.

martyrdom become the supreme acts of the human will whereby the characters are raised to a higher sanctity and self-fulfilment despite their obvious bondage to sin. In their acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom the characters reveal the presence of a total, selfless love in the midst of their corrupt world, and these acts of human love are both their declaration of faith and the source of their redemption and peace. Because Greene is intent on depicting the human element in the crisis of faith, he approaches the process of these sacrificial acts of love in ways that are not strictly orthodox. The spirit of the Catholic faith in the lives of his characters is more important to him than the law of the faith.

The intention of this thesis, therefore, is to discover the ways each instance of self-sacrifice or martyrdom adheres to and extends the the traditional meaning of these religious concepts. This analysis will proceed from a close reading of the development of each major character as he responds to the challenge of his religious vision, the challenge to sacrifice himself for the love of God or for the love of another. The motives leading to each decision and the process enacted to accomplish this most significant of human acts will be studied solely within the context of the novel itself rather than within the wider context of Greene's work as a whole. Comparisons with and references to other works by Greene will be made only to illuminate or reinforce specific points made by each novel. For Greene does not purport one definition or interpretation of the acts of martrydom and self-sacrifice, but offers a multiplicity of views, from novel to novel, thereby deepening one's understanding of its meaning, drama and variety. This is one of Greene's greatest gifts as a novelist, to be able to return to the same motif or theme in a

of novels and yet to present it with a new dimension and insight each time.

The first chapter of this thesis begins with a short explanation of Greene's preoccupations with evil that clearly influence his character portrayal. This is followed by an examination of Brighton Rock that focuses on Pinkie's rebellion to the call of self-sacrifice, as a result of wounded pride and as a means to assert his self-importance in the eyes of God, and on Rose's extension of the meaning of self-sacrifice by her willingness to be damned with Pinkie out of her love for him. Concluding the first chapter is a discussion of The Heart of the Matter that shows Scobie's tremendous love and self-sacrifice to be the results of a disguised pity and pride, and of a misunderstanding of the commands of his Catholic faith. The second chapter examines the faith and lives of three priests who all die in the witness of their faith. The first part examines The Power and the Glory to see how Greene transforms the idea of martyrdom by portraying this act in a character who is not only reluctant to perform it, but also unworthy to be such a witness to the power and glory of God. Part two studies how Greene applies the traditional concept of martyrdom, in The Honorary Consul, to a socially conscious, post-Vatican II priest in the context of liberation theology. The last part examines how the martyrdom of the title character in Monsignor Quixote is the result of his fundamental adherence to the teachings and spirit of Christ, which threatens the institution of the Church whose rules he inadvertently breaks. In the final chapter, the transformation of human love to divine love and the "dark night" of the modern soul on its painful journey to faith are analysed in the lives of Sarah Miles and Maurice Bendrix in The End of the Affair.

This novel is Greene's most intense depiction of the process and costs of self-sacrifice as it leads his characters to an act of faith and a love of God.

The subject of this thesis is the product of close readings of the texts and of a personal interest in the religious act of one's total sacrifice to God in faith. Because of the central role played by the acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in the development of both character and plot, and in the elucidation of Greene's themes, questions concerning the nature and importance, process and effects of these significant acts continually arise. Without a more clearly defined idea on how Greene utilizes these religious concepts, and to what purpose, a deeper understanding of his vision, as revealed through the realism of his characters and their actions, cannot be attained. Part of Greene's "added dimension" will remain obscure. This thesis is therefore written in the belief that its subject, rarely identified and treated in most critical works on Greene's novels, is a valid one for literary study and crucial to a complete understanding of Greene's characters and themes. Yet, ultimately, this thesis is written with the more personal belief that the study of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in Greene's Catholic novels is important for a deeper and more enlightened understanding of one's own life and faith. Good literature should always teach readers more about themselves in some way; Greene's Catholic fiction accomplishes this task.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SACRIFICE OF THE SOUL

> It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation.
> (T.S. Eliot, "Baudelaire")

Part I: The Background

Graham Greene, in a 1936 essay on Henry James, writes that all of James's works are concerned with describing "a sense of evil religious in its intensity". He goes on to comment that,

> If there are times when we feel...that he could have passed his sentence on less evidence, we have always to admit, as the long record of human corruption unrolls, that he has never allowed us to lose sight of the main case; and because his mind is bent on rendering even evil 'the highest kind of justice', the symmetry of his thought lends the whole body of his work the importance of a system.[1]

His comments on James can be directly, and accurately, applied to his own works, particularly to his Catholic novels. The recurrence of certain types of characters and of specific situations and themes in Greene's works reveals, if not a "system of evil", at least an obsession with portraying evil in the world and with revealing the fallen state of man in concrete and contemporary terms. Greene's obsession with evil, seen as the dominating force in men's lives, and his vision of human life as the point of intersection of heaven and hell, began with his young adolescent experience of living on the border between the two worlds of his home and his boarding school dormitory. In his travel book, The Lawless Roads (1939), which

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1 Graham Greene, "Henry James: The Private Universe", Collected Essays (London: The Bodley Head, 1969), pp. 23-4.

recounts his trip to Mexico in 1938, he describes the torment he experienced of living in the tension of two worlds that simultaneously demanded his total allegiance and the incarnate evil he first witnessed in the lawless world of the dormitory.

> One was an inhabitant of both countries: on Saturday and Sunday afternoons of one side of the baize door, the rest of the week of the other. How can life on a border be other than restless? You are pulled by different ties of hate and love. For hate is quite as powerful a tie: it demands allegiance. In the land of the skyscrapers, of stone stairs and cracked bells ringing early, one was aware of fear and hate, a kind of lawlessness - appalling cruelties could be practised without a second thought; one met for the first time characters, adult and adolescent, who bore about them the genuine quality of evil....Hell lay about them in their infancy.[2]

It was about a year later that the evil which impressed Greene so deeply in his experience was to find confirmation and description, not in his Anglican religion, but in his reading. Greene has many times stressed that it is only in one's childhood that books radically alter one's thinking and mould one's convictions. When one is older, books confirm or modify one's already held beliefs but they do not substantially change them. So it was that, at the age of fourteen, Greene found in Marjorie Bowen's The Viper of Milan a verbal expression of his intuitive sense of evil. In his essay, "The Lost Childhood" (1947), he writes:

> Goodness has only once found a perfect incarnation in a human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there. Human nature is not black and white but black and grey. I read all that in The Viper of Milan and I looked round and I saw that it was so.
>
> There was another theme I found there....the sense of doom that lies over success - the feeling that the pendulum is about to swing. That too

2 Graham Greene, The Lawless Roads (London: William Heinemann, 1955), p. 4.

> made sense; one looked around and saw the doomed everywhere...
>
> One had lived for fourteen years in a wild jungle country without a map, but now the paths had been traced and naturally one had to follow them....Anyway she had given me my pattern - religion might later explain it to me in other terms, but the pattern was already there - perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again, and only the pendulum ensures that after all in the end justice is done.[3]

It is from this pervading sense of evil in the world, of life lived on a borderland between Good and Evil, that the young Greene developed a primitive sense of faith and formulated a negative theology. For Greene, the presence of God is demonstrated by His absence, the existence of heaven by the existence of hell, the reality of happiness by the reality of suffering, and the virtue of the saint by the vice of the sinner. In short, the force of Good exists because of the observable fact of the force of Evil. In The Lawless Roads, Greene describes the beginnings of this non-dogmatic faith in the short moments of peace he experienced in his home before he was forced to cross the border back to the evil world of his dormitory.

> And so faith came to one - shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way. One began to believe in heaven because one believed in hell, but for a long while it was only hell one could picture with a certain intimacy - the pitchpine partitions of the dormitory...The Anglican Church could not supply the same intimate symbols for heaven; only a big brass eagle...
>
> ...The Mother of God took the place of the brass eagle: one began to have a dim conception of the appalling mysteries of love moving through the ravaged world - the Curé d'Ars admitting to his mind all the impurity of a province, Péguy challenging God in the cause of the damned. It [faith] remained something one associated with

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3 Greene, "The Lost Childhood", Collected Essays, pp. 17-9.

misery, violence, evil...[4]

It is in Catholicism, as Philip Stratford suggests, that Greene finds a "theological pattern and the shaping dogma"[5] that sustain his childhood perceptions of evil and negative faith. Yet Catholicism also provides Greene with the contrary belief in the workings of divine grace in the world and supplies him "with powerful symbols for the good"[6] that counter his Jansenist sensibilities.

Thus in Greene's Catholic novels, particularly in Brighton Rock, his obsession with evil finds itself interwoven with his contrary religious awareness of the mercy of God. Nevertheless, the tangible presence of God in his novels remains, for the most part, conspicuously lacking. Evil walks through his novels where perfect good can no longer walk. The awareness and presence of God comes intangibly from the outside in the form of grace and tries to break into the hearts of his characters, who are hardened by their habits of sin and pride and by the corrupting, physical presence of evil that surrounds them. Greene's fiction, as a result, visualizes in dramatic, concrete, and contemporary terms the description of fallen man, vividly expressed in Christian terms by Cardinal Newman in his Apologia Pro Vita Sua, which Greene takes as the epigraph of The Lawless Roads.

> To consider the world...the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions,

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4 Greene, The Lawless Roads, pp. 5-6.

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5 Philip Stratford, Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), p. 177.

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6 Ibid.

the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, "having no hope, and without God in the world" - all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence...*if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity.[7]

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7 Greene, *The Lawless Roads*, epigraph.

Part II: Brighton Rock

Brighton Rock (1938) is generally declared by critics to be Greene's first truly Catholic novel. This declaration has been met by Greene with disappointment and puzzlement. He had converted to Catholicism in 1926 and had written five novels and two entertainments as a Catholic before the publication of Brighton Rock.[8] Why hadn't anyone noticed his religious, and specifically Catholic, sensibilities in any of his previous works? One reason is that, though Greene noticeably employs religious ideas throughout his early works, these ideas never become a central, dominating element in the narratives. Faith and religion are presented in these early works in an emotional and romanticized way and the demands of religious faith do not directly affect the actions or thoughts of the characters. Chant, in The Name of Action (1930), Crane, in Rumour at Nightfall (1931), and Minty, in England Made Me (1935), for example, feel a momentary attraction to religion as a means of providing the sense of security and peace they long for in their corrupt and sordid lives, but they can see it only as an ancient ritual, and a source of empty, anachronistic symbols from a past age which their modern scepticism cannot accept.[9] Religious faith eludes them. In these early works,

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8 Greene himself sets up this distinction of novel and entertainment for his works. In a 1955 radio interview with Walter Allen he says: "'In one's entertainments one is primarily interested in having an exciting story as in a physical action, with just enough character to give interest in the action, because you can't be interested in the action of a mere dummy. In the novels I hope one is primarily interested in the character and the action takes a minor part.'" David Pryce-Jones, Graham Greene, Writers and Critics (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p. 62.

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9 See Richard Johnstone, "The Catholic Novelist I: Graham Greene", The Will to Believe: Novelists of the Nineteen-thirties, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 66- 72., and Philip Stratford, Faith and Fiction, pp. 170-3.

the characters see only a brief, tentative glimpse of faith from the outside, yet they are never permitted to enter into its mysteries. Faith and religion, which direct the destinies of Pinkie and Rose in Brighton Rock, never become vital forces affecting the destinies of these earlier characters.

Another reason for declaring Brighton Rock Greene's first Catholic novel is that Greene himself suggested that it was only in the few years before the publication of the novel that he felt sufficiently experienced as a Catholic to use Catholicism as the formative background for his characters. Richard Johnstone supports this idea in his discussion of the novel by quoting Greene in a published interview as saying that during the ten years following his conversion he "'simply hadn't had sufficient experience of how Catholics think or behave, and therefore...couldn't write about them'".[10] Greene later writes that "by 1937 the time was ripe for me to use Catholic characters".[11] These comments coincide with Greene's autobiographical writings about his discovery of an emotional quality in his faith while he was reporting the effects of the Socialist revolution in Mexico, which attempted to expel Catholicism from that country. Greene had always maintained that his conversion to Catholicism was brought about by purely logical arguments. His faith was an intellectual faith. Yet Greene states, looking back over the decades, that it was in Mexico, as he corrected the proofs for Brighton Rock, that he became aware of an ardent religious emotion that had gradually grown within him during the previous year while he wrote the novel. This religious emotion climaxed in his witnessing of

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10 Johnstone, The Will to Believe, p. 64.

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11 Graham Greene, Ways of Escape (London: The Bodley Head, 1980), p. 74.

the courageous faith of the persecuted Catholics in Mexico and in his sympathizing with Republican Spain under the attack of General Franco. As Greene writes,

> I think it was under those two influences - and the backward and forward sway of my sympathies - that I began to examine more closely the effect of faith on action. Catholicism was no longer primarily symbolic, a ceremony at an altar...It was closer now to death in the afternoon....
>
> It was in Mexico too that I discovered some emotional belief, among the empty and ruined churches from which the priests had been excluded...but probably emotion had been astir before that...[12]

By his own account, therefore, Greene first begins to examine "the effect of faith on action" in Brighton Rock. Yet the Catholic faith explicit in the narrative framework of that novel is one that incorporates much of Greene's personal, obsessive vision of the world.

In Brighton Rock, Greene's childhood ideas about evil, tempered by his mature Catholic belief in divine grace, and his experience of life as a borderland between opposing forces, find their most direct and horrific expression in the characters, actions, and relationships of Pinkie Brown, Rose Wilson, and Ida Arnold. What began as a "simple detective story", Greene says concerning the writing of the novel, turned into a metaphysical story of "the distinction between good-and-evil and right-and-wrong and the mystery of 'the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God'".[13] As a result of the change in Greene's intention, a dual plot emerges in Brighton Rock. The melodramatic pursuit of Pinkie by the worldly justice of Ida is paralleled and superseded by the spiritual pursuit of Pinkie's soul by the mercy of God. The world of Brighton becomes a metaphorical

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12 Ibid., pp. 75-6.

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13 Ibid., pp. 76-7.

battleground between the forces of dark and light and the three central characters become representatives of the hot, cold, and lukewarm of faith. At the centre of the divine pursuit of Pinkie's soul is the demand for self-sacrifice. It is in this act that the paradoxical themes of the novel find expression and unity. The sacrifice of the self to God inextricably involves the discussion of the themes of free will and divine grace, of the saint concealed within the sinner, of salvation and damnation, of betrayal and responsibility, of the closeness of evil to God, and of the destructive power of human pity and the redemptive power of human love. The call to self-sacrifice becomes the pivotal moment of religious crisis in the lives of Pinkie and Rose and it is in their acceptance or rejection of this call to self-sacrifice that Brighton Rock finds its conflict and meaning. In Pinkie's refusal to sacrifice his pride to God, and in Rose's willingness to sacrifice her soul for her love of Pinkie, the novel reaches both its narrative and thematic climaxes and the nature of self-sacrifice is redefined.

Pinkie is the embodiment of evil, which Greene had discovered in his reading of The Viper of Milan and had seen walking in his dormitory, but he was not born evil. He is a stunted, immature creature whose innocence and belief in goodness have been prematurely destroyed by the corrupting experiences and environment of his childhood. Pinkie, in a real sense, is the product of man's original sin, Newman's "terrible aboriginal calamity", which populates his world with the tangible signs of the evil of fallen man. These childhood experiences leave lasting marks on the personality and sensibilities of Pinkie, and he carries in his youthful appearance the ancient brand of fallen man.

> From behind he looked younger than he was...but

> when you met him face to face he looked older; the slaty eyes were touched with the annihilating eternity from which he had come and to which he went.[14]

By witnessing the poverty, squalor and suffering of the slums of Nelson Place and Paradise Piece, and the degrading, dehumanizing sexual activities of his parents each Saturday night, Pinkie develops within himself a profound sense of worthlessness and abandonment, and an intense feeling of disgust for his humiliating human existence, from which he must escape at all costs.

> That was what happened to a man in the end: the stuffy room, the wakeful children, the Saturday night movements from the other bed. Was there no escape - anywhere - for anyone? It was worth murdering a world.
>
> ...all his pride coiled like a watch spring round the thought that he wasn't deceived, that he wasn't going to give himself up to marriage and the birth of children, he was going to be where Colleoni now was and higher...(p. 130)

As compensation for his sense of worthlessness, a fierce egotism, a monstrous pride, and a perverted sexuality are born in Pinkie. This seventeen-year-old gangster, reminiscent of the adolescent Raymond Courrèges in Mauriac's The Desert of Love, seeks revenge on the world from a sense of injustice and injured pride that perverts his ideas of self, love, and sex. Like Raven in A Gun for Sale (1936), who was a secular model for the character of Pinkie, he becomes a "fallen angel", a Lucifer figure who never recovers from the insult life has given his pride. As Greene writes:

> ...Raven the killer, seems to me now a first sketch for Pinkie in Brighton Rock. He is a Pinkie who has aged but not grown up. The Pinkies are the real Peter Pans - doomed to be juvenile for a lifetime. They have something of a fallen angel about them, a morality which once belonged to another place. The outlaw of justice always

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14 Graham Greene, Brighton Rock (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), p. 26. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.

> keeps in his heart the sense of justice outraged...As children we have all suffered punishments for faults we have not committed, but the wound has soon healed. With Raven and Pinkie the wound never heals.[15]

As a result of his early experiences, Pinkie's Catholic faith develops an emphasis in the belief of evil. His religious aspirations to become a priest and the pleasure and comfort he felt when he sang the Mass as a child are crushed by the awful weight of the sinfulness of man that surrounds him in the shape of the poverty of his environment. In a faith that professes goodness, peace, and hope in the world of man he has only found evil, misery, and hopelessness. Life for Pinkie is a Mephistophilian hell and a constant torment, just as he later discovers it is for Drewitt the lawyer. His positive belief in good and in the symbols and sacraments of his faith, which once gave him a sense of peace, is forever lost in his devastating childhood experiences of evil, and now remain only nostalgic memories. He longs to return to that state of faith, but is prevented by his inordinate pride.

> "Why, I was in a choir once," the Boy confided, and suddenly he began to sing softly in his spoilt boy's voice: "Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem." In his voice a whole lost world moved; the lighted corner below the organ, the smell of incense and laundered surplices, and the music.(p. 71)

Greene's words describing the religious sense of Henry James are an accurate description of Pinkie's sense of religion: "His religion was always a mirror of his experience. Experience taught him to believe in supernatural evil, but not in supernatural good."[16] Thus Pinkie, in order to explain his corrupt vision of life, adopts a

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15 Greene, Ways of Escape, p. 72.

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16 Greene, "Henry James: The Religious Aspect", Collected Essays, p. 52.

negative theology that accepts the reality of evil and hell and regards good and heaven as improbable corollaries. When he speaks to Rose about his Catholic beliefs, his reversed theology becomes apparent.

> "Of course it's true," the Boy said. "What else could there be?" he went scornfully on. "Why," he said, "it's the only thing that fits. These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation," he said with his eyes on the dark shifting water..."torments."
> "And Heaven too," Rose said with anxiety...
> "Oh, maybe," the Boy said, "maybe."(p. 72)

Pinkie himself becomes the incarnation of his negative theology. He is evil because he was once good. In him one finds a mixture of the Christ who is betrayed and the Judas who betrays. Pinkie's goodness and his sense of peace are betrayed by his past just as he will later, in his pride and ambition, betray the love of Rose and the Spirit of God within him by his refusal to sacrifice himself in repentance to the mercy of God. R.W.B. Lewis suggests this idea when he writes:

> These paradoxes, too, are incarnate in the central figure. Pinkie...is a replica of Judas who none the less has faint confusing echoes about him of the perfectly good, of Christ. He is the worst only by virtue of being the corruption of the best.[17]

Experience has taught Pinkie that he can only be sure of pain, suffering, and hell. Evil is always incarnate around him while the goodness of God is absent. "Credo in unum Satanum"(p. 241) becomes Pinkie's professed creed of faith. Yet, even in his adoption of Satanism, Pinkie continues to affirm his faith in and need of God, and his longing for His mercy and peace. Pinkie's very sinfulness and belief in evil become negative signs of his latent holiness and

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17 R.W.B. Lewis, "The Trilogy", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Samuel Hynes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 58.

positive belief in good in the same way that T.S. Eliot described Baudelaire's Satanism as denoting a Christian belief.

> Satanism itself, so far as not merely an affectation, was an attempt to get into Christianity by the back door. Genuine blasphemy, genuine in spirit and not purely verbal, is the product of partial belief, and is as impossible to the complete atheist as to the perfect Christian. It is a way of affirming belief.[18]

In this way, Pinkie's evil is proposed throughout the novel as being closer to the heart of Christianity in its denial of God than the humanism of Ida, who supplants a faith in God with a belief in her personal, ethical sense of worldly justice and a belief that this life is everything and therefore should be defended at all costs. His union with evil does not preclude the power of God to redeem him, as it affirms God's very existence and affords the opportunity for God's grace to save him. Greene "never portrays man as so mired in sin", writes Francis Kunkel, "as to be beyond the power of redemption. Those of his characters who are most strongly committed to sin always retain their freedom to renounce it, to respond to the tug of divine grace".[19] Ida has no such freedom. Her humanism and personal sense of justice render God powerless because they deny His very existence. As Frederick Karl writes, "only indifference...can destroy God".[20] Throughout the novel, therefore, Greene portrays Ida as being worse in her working class belief of right and wrong, of which she is the self-appointed authority, than Pinkie in his Catholic belief of good

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18 T.S. Eliot, "Baudelaire", Selected Essays, ed. John Hayward (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Faber and Faber, 1955), p. 187.

19 Francis Kunkel, The Labyrinthine Ways of Graham Greene (Mamaroneck, N.Y.: Paul P. Appel, 1973), p. 137.

20 Frederick Karl, "Greene's Demonical Heroes", A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), p. 92.

and evil, of which God is the authority.[21]

This denigration of her motives and actions to Pinkie's conscious choice of evil has presented a problem to critics such as Helen Gardner and Derek Traversi, who feel that Greene is unjustly romanticizing the figures of Pinkie and Rose while making Ida into a caricature.[22] While Greene's artistic representation may indeed be criticized, the realm of belief which each character represents, and their status in relationship to each other, cannot be criticized, for they are the 'givens' of the novel which must only be judged within the context established by the narrative. Pinkie and Ida are therefore opposites in their faiths and, even in his sinfulness, he is greater than she because he has a soul to lose. Ida, in relationship to Pinkie, becomes the type of believer warned against in the New Testament: "I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. You say to yourself, 'I am rich...and have everything I want, never realizing that you are wretchedly and pitiably poor, and blind and naked too".[23]

Pinkie's introduction into crime by Kite, the murdered gang leader who had become Pinkie's model and father-figure, gives him the means of eradicating his past and achieving a sense of the self-importance, power and security of which he has been deprived. His pride becomes a "poison in his veins"(p. 93) and compels him to

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21 See Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Chatto and Windus, 1981), p. 117, for a discussion of Ida's working middle-class values.

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22 See Helen Gardner, "Francois Mauriac: A Woman of the Pharisees", The Penguin New Writing, XXXI, ed. John Lehman (London: 1947), p. 102, and Derek Traversi, "Graham Greene: The Earlier Novels", Graham Greene: A collection of Critical Essays, p. 26.

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23 The Jerusalem Bible (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1966), Revelation 3.15-19.

seek his glory through terror and violence. But even in the world of crime he remains insignificant. He is ignored and alienated by the society he attempts to impress by his misdeeds. Pinkie finds himself continually insulted by the reminders of his past, Colleoni's superiority and indifference, his treatment at the Cosmopolitan and by the authorities, and by his ignorance of adult relationships and "the brutish game"(p. 170) of sex. When he is insulted by the police inspector, his pride grows stronger in its control over him and confirms him in his evil quest of glory. "He had been insulted. He was going to show the world....He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him: hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths"(p. 93).

As his illusions of becoming "a conqueror"(p. 196) in the world of Brighton crumble, his direction in crime alters from a temporal to an eternal perspective. If he cannot "show the world", he will show God his superiority. The deaths he is ready for will become the spiritual deaths of his soul and that of Rose's. For though his crimes remain insignificant in the world of right and wrong, he knows his mortal sins are significant in the world of good and evil. He has failed to establish his self-importance in society, therefore he will achieve his self-importance in the eyes of God in his conscious choice of damnation. This is the core of Pinkie's perverted view of himself. He is important because he has a soul to lose. The essence of this attitude and spiritual pride is identical to that of Baudelaire's as described by T.S. Eliot.

> It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation. The worst that can be said of most of our malefactors...is that they are not men enough to be damned. Baudelaire was man enough for damnation: whether he <u>is</u> damned is, of course,

> another question...In all his humiliating traffic with other beings, he walked secure in this high vocation, that he was capable of damnation...[24]

This then becomes Pinkie's escape from a life that belittles and ignores his existence. He will use his Catholic faith, with its belief in good and evil, as a means to infuse his criminal acts with spiritual significance and dignity, and thereby raise himself above common humanity. As Kathleen Nott observes of Pinkie, Catholicism does not foster an internal moral religious conscience that produces the "impressive fruit of charity" or a "greater understanding of fellow-sufferers and fellow-sinners", but merely provides him with "a certain security of vaingloriousness and self-satisfaction which is deeply offensive to a merely humane and ethical conscience".[25] Pinkie's Catholicism allows him to assume the role of God over the destiny of his soul. His actions are no longer important as worldly crimes but as crimes against the authority of God.[26] Pinkie walks with pride in the knowledge that he, like Baudelaire, is man enough to be damned and that in his power over his soul he finds his glory. As Richard Johnstone writes:

> Pinkie cannot bear the idea that his existence may be pointless. The conscious progress towards Hell gives him the knowledge of his own significance that he requires. He acts within a strictly defined framework of divine reward and punishment. Pinkie's lot will be

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24 T.S. Eliot, "Baudelaire", Selected Essays, p. 194.

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25 Kathleen Nott, The Emperor's Clothes (London: William Heinemann, 1953), p. 310.

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26 Greene himself maintains that Pinkie does not defy God by his actions: "I don't think that Pinkie was guilty of mortal sin because his actions were not committed in defiance of God, but arose out of the conditions to which he had been born." Marie-Francoise Allain, The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene (London: The Bodley Head, 1983), pp. 158-9. As I have attempted to argue, Pinkie's motives are indeed the result of his social condition but his actions, failing to impress society, become important precisely because they are mortal sins challenging God for his soul.

> punishment, but that is preferable for him to the knowledge that whatever his temporal actions, the end result will be a vacuum. The prospect of damnation offers eventual escape from the reality he detests...[27]

In Pinkie's progress from crimes against the body to crimes against the soul, his own understanding of evil increases. He regards the murders he has committed as "trivial acts, a boy's game"(p. 243) when compared to the mortal sin he will perpetrate in his non-sacramental marriage to Rose. His abandonment to sin and crime has grown to the point of damning, not only his evil soul, but also the innocent and good soul of another. "Murder had only led to this - this corruption. He was filled with awe at his own powers"(p. 243). By corrupting the goodness of Rose with the destructive, negative power of mortal sin, he feels the added self-significance and glory of taking from God what is rightfully his. As they sign the marriage certificate that seals them in mortal sin, he has no doubt of their damnation, for which he is solely responsible, and once again he is "filled with a kind of gloomy hilarity and pride"(p. 246). His glory, his sense of earthly significance and greatness, has been purchased with their souls. He now sees himself as fully grown in evil and great enough a sinner to be pitied by the angels of God.

It is this belief in the significance of his act of damnation that prevents Pinkie from repenting his evil and submitting himself to the mercy and grace of God. "Seeking God's forgiveness", writes J.P. Kulshrestha, "means to seek a change in the governing principle of one's personality, to seek freedom from egocentricity."[28] To repent,

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27 Johnstone, The Will to Believe, p. 75.

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28 J.P. Kulshrestha, Graham Greene: The Novelist (London: The Macmillan Press, 1983), p. 72.

therefore, constitutes an act of self-sacrifice that reestablishes man's relationship to God as creature to creator, and submits man's will to the divine will. Pinkie cannot do this. The very glory of his human existence is wrapped up in a pride that he has nurtured and is compelled to defend. Like Louis, the journal writer in Mauriac's The Knot of Vipers, Pinkie has sacrificed his love of self, God, and others for the love of his pride. He cannot bear to part with that which has cost him his very life and soul, even if it has only brought him suffering. The words Louis uses when writing to his wife about the money to which he has attached his self-importance can easily become the words describing Pinkie's unspoken attachment to his pride addressed to God. "You'd like me, wouldn't you, to sacrifice to you that to which I've sacrificed everything else? Oh no, my money's cost me far too dear for me to give up a single penny of it until I've breathed my last."[29]

Pinkie's pride controls him now. To give it up in an act of humble repentance and self-sacrifice seems to him like death, the annihilation of his entire being and the meaning of his very existence. Yet this total sacrifice of the self in repentance is the only meaningful and acceptable human sacrifice to God and the only one that promises the peace and forgiveness of His mercy. As the Psalmist tells us, "God's sacrifice is a soul with its evil crushed: a heart broken with penitence, O God, never wilt thou despise."[30] Unlike the protagonist in Mauriac's novel, Pinkie cannot make the leap of faith from the temporal security of his pride to the eternal peace of God's mercy. He is a slave to the sin of his pride, his lower nature, in

29 Francois Mauriac, "The Knot of Vipers", A Mauriac Reader, ed. Wallace Fowlie (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), p. 336.

30 James Moffat, A New Translation of the Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), Psalm 51.17.

the exact manner described by St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans.

> In my inmost self I dearly love God's law, but I can see that my body follows a different law that battles against the law which my reason dictates. This is what makes me a prisoner of that law of sin which lives inside my body.[31]

Early in his relationship with Rose, Pinkie wonders whether there is enough time to repent of one's life at the moment of death. The verse "Between the stirrup and the ground, he something sought and something found"(p. 128) comes into his memory, but Rose has to supply the missing word, "mercy". When Pinkie is attacked by Colleoni's mob, he finds himself in this precise moment between life and death and he discovers that, for him, there is not enough time to repent. He is too busy fighting to save his life to feel the remorse necessary to save his soul. When he escapes his pursuers, he finds that he cannot think about contrition; he can only think about the injury his pride has suffered at the hands of Colleoni's men: "...it wasn't eternity he thought about but his own humiliation"(p. 153). In this moment of temporary safety, under the cover of approaching night, Pinkie realizes that this is the time he should make his repentance, but he cannot bring himself to repent the murders and betrayals which have given him a demonic sense of superiority and safety. His pride stands as an impregnable barrier between his will and his desire to return to his childhood faith and to sacrifice himself to the mercy of God.

> It was impossible to repent of something which made him safe....when he was thoroughly secure, he could begin to think of making peace, of going home, and his heart weakened with a faint nostalgia for the tiny dark confessional box, the priest's voice...to be made safe from eternal pain.(p. 155)

During the course of the novel, the subtle, intensifying pursuit of grace continues to follow Pinkie demanding his sacrifice. The

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31 The Jerusalem Bible, Romans 7.21-3.

reader is constantly made aware of the presence of God in the recurring images of water, light, birds, and in the prowling figure of the old man forever searching among the debris of the Brighton pier. Together they represent the redemption and the grace that are never far from him. When Greene employs this figurative language, the temporal quality of his entertainment is elevated to the eternal quality of the spiritual drama of man running from God. The stark realism conveys a greater, spiritual vision. An example of the heightening effects of this language can be seen in the description of the Brighton shore, which is presented to the reader in Greene's typical cinematic style of blending panoramic views with quickly shifting detailed close-ups. This device of writing as if for a camera allows the tone of the description to remain cold and impersonal, yet it also allows Greene the freedom to insert his authorial comments, which he assumes is the right of the novelist.[32]

> An old man went stooping down the shore, very slowly, turning the stones, picking among the dry seaweed for cigarette ends, scraps of food. The gulls which had stood like candles down the beach rose and cried under the promenade. The old man found a boot and stowed it in his sack, and a gull dropped from the parade and swept through the iron nave of the Palace Pier, white and purposeful in the obscurity: half vulture and half dove. In the end one always had to learn.(p. 190)

But even more than these images and this figure, the presence of God is directly felt by the reader, and by Pinkie, in the instruments of His divine grace: music and Rose.

Pinkie is continually haunted by memories of lines he had sung

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32 In an essay on François Mauriac, Greene defends the right of the author to comment in his own work: "...he is a writer...who claims the traditional and essential right of a novelist to comment, to express his views....the exclusion of the author can go too far. Even the author, poor devil, has a right to exist, and M. Mauriac reaffirms that right." "François Mauriac", Collected Essays, pp. 116,117.

during the Mass and by the sounds of any music. In his egotism he has developed the ability to feel no tenderness, emotion, or compassion for another. He cannot, because of the habit of his pride, see the world from any other perspective except his own perverted one. It is only music that threatens this hardness of heart and the security of his egotism.

> That was his strength. He couldn't see through other people's eyes, or feel with their nerves. Only music made him uneasy, the cat-gut vibrating in the heart; it was like nerves losing their freshness, it was like age coming on, other people's experience battering on the brain.(p. 62)

Music causes him to feel a sense of pity and responsibility for others as well as for the forgotten good that he is crucifying in himself. "That music...it was the nearest he knew to sorrow"(p. 63). It doesn't matter what kind of music he heard; all music is a grace of God that stirs his deadened emotions and reminds him of the lost world of peace, love, and sacrifice which he, secure in his fierce, egoistic pride, can no longer understand or accept. "The words 'Dona nobis pacem,' came again to mind; for the second time he felt a faint nostalgia, as if for something he had lost or forgotten or rejected"(p. 171).

This repeated attack by the grace of music comes to a climax on the day of Pinkie's marriage. As he sits with Rose in a cinema, feeling the weight of the mortal sin he has just forced them to commit, and realizing the abhorred sexual consummation he will be forced to perform, Pinkie's hardened emotions and obstinate will are weakened and made susceptible to the moving quality of the music he hears. This grace claims him and breaks down his defences, offering him a vision of the ways of escape from his sins; but the habit of his pride is too overpowering.

> He shut his eyes to hold in his tears, but the music went on - it was like a vision of release to an imprisoned man. He felt constriction and saw - hopelessly out of reach - a limitless freedom: no fear, no hatred, no envy. It was as if he were dead and were remembering the effect of a good confession, the words of absolution; but being dead it was a memory only - he couldn't experience contrition - the ribs of his body were like steel bands which held him down to eternal unrepentance.(p. 261)

It remains for Rose to continue the work of grace that will lead Pinkie to possible self-sacrifice and redemption.

Rose, the sixteen-year-old waitress, is good. She is the necessary complement to Pinkie's evil. She comes from the same environment and experience as Pinkie, yet she represents a different response to this past. Her innocence and her belief in the goodness of life remain uncorrupted by the conditions of Nelson Place. She does not develop an indomitable pride but an unconquerable humility. Together Rose and Pinkie form the hot and cold of faith. Their common belief in sin and grace, salvation and damnation unites them and elevates them to a plane of understanding that the faithless society of Brighton, symbolized in Ida, cannot imagine exists. When Rose and Pinkie meet, the world represented by Ida can only stand by mute.

> It was as if she were in a strange country: the typical Englishwoman abroad. She hadn't even got a phrase book. She was as far from either of them as she was from Hell - or Heaven. Good and evil lived in the same country, spoke the same language, came together like old friends, feeling the same completion, touching hands beside the iron bedstead.(p. 180)

The good and evil Rose and Pinkie represent meet not as enemies but as allies. Pinkie's prideful will to inflict pain and to dominate is complemented by Rose's humble will to bear suffering and to submit. The sinner and the saint, the persecutor and the martyr are part of the same divine mystery. Pinkie understands this when he sees Rose

defiantly resisting Ida's inquiries on his behalf.

> He was aware that she belonged to his life, like a room or a chair: she was something which completed him...What was most evil in him needed her: it couldn't get along without goodness....She was good, he'd discovered that, and he was damned: they were made for each other.(pp. 179-80)

In Rose's humility, goodness, and ability to love, she becomes the personification of grace through which God attacks Pinkie and Pinkie attacks God. This personification of grace in a human figure is a standard teaching of Catholic doctrine. As one highly regarded Catholic catechism states,

> Grace is not merely inward. It is also external, interwoven with all the realities of our life. For instance, Christ's grace in a wife can be a grace for the husband. Then she is herself a grace, a gesture of God's liberal, redemptive love....The most important way of the Spirit is through other men.[33]

As the incarnation of the spirit and grace of God, Rose becomes a threat to the security of Pinkie's egotism and evil. She causes him to become torn between his satanic pride and his inner longing for sanctity and mercy. Her love for him reminds him of his need for the love of God and demands from him a sense of responsibility and pity for others. Her goodness and innocence reflect by contrast his own corruption and fall from holiness and grace. And finally, her very appearance restores the memory of his humiliating past that he strives to forget. Pinkie, therefore, is compelled by his demonic sense of self-preservation to corrupt her goodness and to pervert her love by uniting it with his evilness in the mortal sin of their 'false' marriage. Later he will be further compelled to free himself from her physical presence, which stands as a living testament to his human

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33 A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults (London: Burns and Oates; New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), p. 288.

lowliness and insignificance and which persistently calls him to responsibility and love of others. He is driven by his pride to preserve at all costs his evil devotion to the self: "He told himself that soon he would be free again...No more human contacts, other people's emotions washing at the brain - he would be free again: nothing to think about but himself"(p. 336).

Pinkie is too engrained in his experience of evil to see Rose as a reflection of God. He sees her as his complementing antithesis, and therefore as a temptation to good, but he does not see her as representing the grace of God. He is incapable of seeing divine goodness, just as he is incapable of imagining heaven. Rose is good, but to Pinkie it is a mortal goodness she possesses and one he can corrupt.

> Heaven was a word; Hell was something he could trust. A brain was capable only of what it could conceive, and it couldn't conceive what it had never experienced...An awful resentment stirred in him - why shouldn't he have had his chance like all the rest, seen his glimpse of Heaven...He turned...and took a long look at her as if she might be it - but the brain couldn't conceive...Oh, she was good all right, he supposed, but she wasn't good enough; he'd got her down.(p. 331)

Pinkie can therefore resist the temptation he encounters in Rose that urges him to self-sacrifice. As they drive against the heavy rain to the place of Rose's suicide, the grace of God takes another form in its desperate effort to break the hold of Pinkie's pride. Music has failed and Rose's love has failed in the attempt to turn Pinkie from his egotism to selflessness in God. Now, at the climax of the divine pursuit, the spirit of God becomes an actual felt presence that threatens to break through Pinkie's pride and into his heart. This is the ultimate call of God to humility and self-denial in exchange for mercy and peace. But Pinkie withstands this last good

temptation with all the evil of fallen man he has found in his short experience of life. He has invested too much of himself into his evil pride to have the courage now to make the leap of faith into God's forgiveness.

> An enormous emotion beat on him; it was like something trying to get in, the pressure of gigantic wings against the glass. Dona nobis pacem. He withstood it...If the glass broke, if the beast - whatever it was - got in, God knows what it would do. He had a sense of havoc - the confession, the penance, and the sacrament - an awful distraction, and he drove blind into the rain.(pp. 347-8)

In this final moment of refusal of the mercy of God, Pinkie resembles Greene's description of Frederick Rolfe, whose footsteps "on the threshold of Paradise...turn again because of the devilish pride which would not accept even Heaven, except on his own terms".[34]

Rose transforms the idea of self-sacrifice in her devotion to Pinkie. It is not to God that she submits her will and her life, but to him. He becomes her god. Because of her love for Pinkie, she is willing not only to sacrifice her life for him, but also her eternal life. The New Testament statement, "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.",[35] has been reinterpreted. In Rose's sacrifice of her soul, Greene is following the interpretation of self-sacrifice given by Charles Péguy, the Frenchman whose life is recounted by the priest at the end of the novel. Péguy's story is Rose's story.

> "He was a good man, a holy man, and he lived in sin all through his life, because he couldn't bear the idea that any soul could suffer damnation....This man decided that if any soul was going to be damned he would be damned too."(p. 356)

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34 Greene, "Frederick Rolfe: Edwardian Inferno", Collected Essays, p. 174.

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35 The Jerusalem Bible, John 15.13.

Rose becomes the image of the sacrificial Lamb of God, the Christ-figure who will die a physical and spiritual death out of her love for sinful man. Rose is willing to suffer eternal damnation for the possible salvation of another. She believes that any love, particularly her love for Pinkie, may lead to his salvation, and if it doesn't then she is willing to be damned with him for it. She is angry that salvation is granted to some people while it is withheld from others, and she refuses to believe that their God cannot love Pinkie despite his evil and grant him mercy. Rose's actions and decisions realize in a concrete way the profound Catholic belief that, in faith, she and Pinkie are part of the one Mystical Body of Christ and form complementary parts of the one divine mystery of good and evil. Because she loves Pinkie, she must also share responsibility for his sin. Marie-Beatrice Mesnet explains this when she writes,

> One of the greatest mysteries of the spiritual world is the communion of all men in evil and in good, the communion of saints and sinners...We share responsibility for our sins, as we also share love...One soul can atone for another, and by suffering and love lift the load weighing on its freedom.
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> The point is explicitly raised at the end of Brighton Rock, when Pinkie dimly perceives that Rose, with her faith in him and her love, might be the means of his salvation. Her sacrifice will not be wasted; she has assumed for herself responsibility for Pinkie's soul.[36]

Rose's decision to marry Pinkie and then to kill herself with him are therefore motivated by this mystical sense of responsibility produced by her selfless love.

> It was said to be the worst act of all, the act of despair, the sin without forgiveness...He was going to damn himself, but she was going to show them that they couldn't damn him without damning her too; there was nothing he could do she wouldn't do...A light lit his face...a child's

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36 Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 105.

> face; she felt responsibility move in her breasts; she wouldn't let him go into that darkness alone.(p. 332)

Her love for Pinkie is almost that of a mother for her child. Though she longs for any sign of affection from him, which would therefore be a sign of his love for her and of his possible salvation, her responsibility to him is not dependent upon his reciprocal love. "It didn't matter; she loved him; she had her responsibility"(p. 329). Her actions and intentions constitute an act of rebellion and pride against God but, unlike Pinkie's, they are motivated by a selfless love for another and not by a selfish egotism. Nevertheless she has wrongly assumed the role of God in the fervour of her human love and in this act lies her sin. It remains for God to use her for His own plan. She, in effect, becomes an instrument of God's grace despite her challenge of His authority.

In her challenge of God, Rose is shown closer to Him than Ida and the motives behind her actions further belittle Ida's motives by comparison. Rose's Christ- like compassion for Pinkie, whom she knows to be evil and a possible murderer, becomes the perfect antithesis to the "merciless compassion"(p. 172) and personal sense of justice which motivates Ida's vengeance. Ida's pity for Fred, whose death threatens her single belief in the worldly life of promiscuity, fun and adventure, and later her pity for Rose, whom she thinks is defenceless before Pinkie in her youthful infatuation and inexperience of life, casts her as a type of fury in the classical Greek sense who attempts revenge within the narrow, shortsighted scope of justice she understands.

> Somebody had made Fred unhappy, and somebody was going to be made unhappy in turn. An eye for an eye. If you believed in God, you might leave vengeance to Him, but you couldn't trust the One, the universal spirit. Vengeance was Ida's, just

> as much as reward was Ida's...And vengeance and reward - they both were fun.(p. 48)

She does not love Rose, but only herself and the enjoyment of the temporal life which her pursuit of Pinkie brings. It is of no concern to her that she is sending Rose back to the misery of the slums and to parents who would sell their daughter to any man at the right price. Ida is willing to sacrifice anyone and to cause any amount of pain in her proud, terrible sense of pity and justice, while Rose is willing to suffer any pain and to sacrifice her life and soul in her humble compassion and love.

Yet even in Rose's conviction to damn herself, in suicide with Pinkie, she remains ambivalent. She experiences, like her evil counterpart, the good temptation of God to which she eventually succumbs. On her ride to the cliff where the suicide will take place, she is torn between her love for Pinkie and her hope in life, between the evil will of her human god and the good will of her divine God which urges her to save herself:

> "...she was visited by an almost overwhelming rebellion - she had only to go out, leave him, refuse to play. He couldn't make her kill herself; life wasn't as bad as that....there was always hope."(p. 346)

But the tremendous influence of Pinkie compels her on. His will is relentless: "...all the time she felt the steady pressure of his will. His mind was made up"(p. 349). She feels that if she passes up this chance to damn herself with Pinkie that they will be separated for an eternity. She will have missed her only chance "of showing Them they couldn't pick and choose"(p. 349) who was going to be saved or damned. Rose realizes that if she chooses to live while Pinkie dies, then she will never be able to damn herself again and join him in hell, for she believes that the passage of time will lead her

inevitably back to repentance and salvation: "...through a long life the guardian good drove you remorselessly towards the crib, the 'happy death'"(p. 349). She construes her refusal to kill herself as an act of betrayal of her god Pinkie, which she cannot allow, and as a demonstration of the poor quality of her love and loyalty to him, which she is not willing to admit.

Because of her love for Pinkie, she has allowed his narrow, evil vision of life to pervert her own vision of good. He has changed her values around. What she once believed to be evil becomes the good temptation and what she once believed to be good becomes the evil temptation. The "guardian good" that drives her to salvation and life is given the role of satan while virtue is denoted as a sin. Mortal sin and suicide become the noble and virtuous acts of love. To the very moment of her sacrifice, she is moved by the will of Pinkie, whom she trusts more than God. She has chosen her side in the eternal conflict of good and evil and she will remain loyal in her decision.

> If it was a guardian angel speaking to her now, he spoke like a devil - he tempted her to virtue like a sin. To throw away the gun was a betrayal; it would be an act of cowardice; it would mean that she chose never to see him again for ever....The evil act was the honest act, the bold and the faithful...it was a poor love that was afraid to die. She hadn't been afraid to commit mortal sin - it was death not damnation which was scaring her. Pinkie said it wouldn't hurt. She felt his will moving her hand - she could trust him. She put up the gun once more.(pp. 350-1)

But Rose does not complete her sacrifice for Pinkie. She is betrayed in her decision at the very last moment by her indomitable hope that Pinkie will be saved from himself and by her lasting belief in the essential goodness of life. Though she wanted to choose death and damnation in her humble submission to and love of Pinkie, she is prevented by these very qualities of her nature. Her humility and

selfless love keep her from performing the ultimate act of despair just as Pinkie's pride and egotism propel him to it. Rose, in the end, is incapable of the self-pity and egotism that form the very heart of spiritual despair, which is clearly described by the American Trappist monk, Thomas Merton.

> Despair is the absolute extreme of self-love. It is reached when a man deliberately turns his back on all help from anyone else in order to taste the rotten luxury of knowing himself to be lost....
>
> Despair is the ultimate development of a pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves.
>
> But a man who is truly humble cannot despair, because in the humble man there is no longer any such thing as self-pity.[37]

It is her love for Pinkie, as well as her hope in life, that moves her to throw the gun away at the sounds of footsteps behind the car which she immediately interprets as bringing the "good news"(p. 351) that will save Pinkie and her from this act. Her selfless love and loyalty, which Pinkie used to lead her to death and damnation, God has used to lead her back to life and salvation. Rose is as destined for salvation as Pinkie is for damnation. Because she is able to love another, she will always be able to escape her own pride and sinfulness by sacrificing herself to the mercy of God. Pinkie, because he cannot feel love for anyone but himself, will never be able to escape his pride through the sacrifice of repentance. Pinkie becomes his own spiritual victim sacrificed to the god of his pride in his final act of despair. It remains to God, to the "appalling... strangeness"(p. 357) of His mercy, to decide whether Pinkie will be

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37 Thomas Merton, New Seeds of Contemplation (New York: New Directions Books, 1961), p. 180.

granted his choice. Greene's comments about Henry James's portrayal of the good and evil natures of his fictional characters becomes an apt and accurate summation of his own portrayal of the essential differences between Pinkie and Rose in their response to the demands of self-sacrifice.

> He was a realist: he had to show the triumphs of egotism; he was a realist: he had to show that a damned soul had its chains. Milly Theale, Maggie Verver, these 'good' people had their escapes, they were lucky in that they loved, could sacrifice themselves...they were never quite alone on the bench of desolation. But the egotists had no escape, there was no tenderness in their passion...they were, inescapably, themselves.[38]

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38 Greene, "Henry James: The Private Universe", Collected Essays, p. 38.

Part III: The Heart of the Matter

The themes of a Catholic's moral responsibility for man and the necessity of sacrificing one's life and soul for the love of man that are witnessed in Rose, find their most profound treatment ten years later with the publication of The Heart of the Matter(1948). Evelyn Waugh, in reviewing the novel, correctly suggests that this novel "should be read as the complement of Brighton Rock" and that Scobie should be seen as the parallel of Pinkie. "Both believe in damnation and believe themselves damned. Both die in mortal sin as defined by moral theologians."[39] But Waugh's observation of Scobie falls short. Scobie is more than Pinkie's complement; he is the composite of all three main characters of the earlier novel. Possessing Pinkie's awareness of his own evil, he likewise possesses Ida's destructive pity as well as Rose's willingness to die and to suffer eternal punishment for love of another. Scobie is Greene's most subtle portrayal of Péguy's statement that the sinner, like the saint, is found at the heart of Christianity and that he is the most competent in matters of faith, which is taken as the epigraph of the book. In The Heart of the Matter the melodramatic, temporal pursuit of the protagonist has disappeared and emphasis is placed solely on the divine pursuit, which has become an internalized, intellectual one. This progression of increasing subtlety and profound insight in the treatment of the themes of self-sacrifice from Brighton Rock to The Heart of the Matter, and of evil from its obvious embodiment in Pinkie to its impersonation of virtue in Scobie, is clearly described in Greene's own words delineating the progression of evil portrayed in

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39 Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa", The Essays and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh, ed. Donat Gallagher (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 361,363.

the novels of Henry James:

> ...a progress from a rather crude and inexperienced symbolization of truth to truth itself: a progress from evil represented rather obviously in terms of murder to evil 'in propria persona', walking down Bond Street, charming, cultured, sensitive - evil to be distiguished from good chiefly in the complete egotism of its outlook.[40]

Thus, in the protagonist Scobie, Greene presents a new twist to Péguy's idea of the sinner as a saint in disguise that he had earlier demonstrated in more obvious terms in Brighton Rock and The Power and the Glory. Greene demonstrates through Scobie, not that good can come from the sinner, but that sin may come from those who are virtuous. It is Greene's unique portrayal of the saint as a sinner.

Scobie appears to the reader as a good man. He is an English policeman responsible for his West African town and, as such, he is a man with a deep sense of honesty, integrity, and justice. Scobie is also a Catholic, faithful and observant in his religious beliefs. Religion is vital to him and in him there is no image of the Pharisee. But two characteristics mark Scobie's downfall. He is a simple, naive man incapable of solving the intricate problems of faith and theology which arise in his life, and he is a man whose love for others takes the destructive form of pity for all the helpless and suffering creatures of the world. This last quality especially, posing as a virtue, leads Scobie to commit his damnable sin of pride and to resist sacrificing himself to God.

Pity, for Greene, is not the expression of love but the expression of pride. Pity is the opposite of love and by its very nature an eogotistic, destructive force. It conceals beneath its facade of kindness and compassion for others a self-idolatry and

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40 Greene, "Henry James: The Private Universe", Collected Essays, p. 24.

self-centeredness.[41] As W.H Auden writes, "To feel compassion for someone is to make oneself their equal; to pity them is to regard oneself as their superior."[42] In a man's pity for another he excludes God from the relationship and instals the self in His place. In a man's compassion for another he allows God to retain His presence and responsibility. This is the point that Greene attempts to make in his misguided hero Scobie and which, in his opinion, he has not fully succeeded in doing.

> It was to prove a book more popular with the public, even with the critics, than with the author. The scales to me seem too heavily weighted, the plot overloaded, the religious scruples of Scobie too extreme. I had meant the story of Scobie to enlarge a theme which I had touched on in The Ministry of Fear, the disastrous effect on human beings of pity as distinct from compassion. I had written in The Ministry of Fear: 'Pity is cruel. Pity destroys. Love isn't safe when pity's prowling round.' The character of Scobie was intended to show that pity can be the expression of an almost monstrous pride. But I found the effect on readers was quite different. To them Scobie was exonerated, Scobie was 'a good man'...[43]

But on closer examination one will find that Greene did not entirely miss his mark. Scobie, like Brigitte Pian in Mauriac's A Woman of the Pharisees, is a good man whose virtuous intentions conceal an inner evil pride that he, too late, discovers. In this profound and subtle

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41 For a perceptive discussion of this distinction between love and pity, see Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter, pp. 64-5.

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42 W.H.Auden, "The Heresy of Our Time", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 94.

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43 Greene, Ways of Escape, p. 120. Greene revised The Heart of the Matter for later editions in order to accentuate Scobie's sinful pride. For studies of his revisions see David Leon Higdon, "Graham Greene's Second Thoughts: The Text of The Heart of the Matter", Studies in Bibliography, vol. 30 (Charlotteville: The University of Virginia, 1977), pp. 249-56., and Philip Stratford, "Second Thoughts on 'Graham Greene's Second Thoughts': The Five Texts of The Heart of the Matter", Studies in Bibliography, vol. 31 (Charlotteville: The University of Virginia, 1978), pp. 263-6.

study of evil in the world, Greene shows that Scobie's acts of responsibility and pity, while seeming outwardly the acts of good, are only "the camouflage of an enemy who works in terms of friendship, trust, and pity".[44] As Gene Kellogg concludes,"Scobie's virtue itself is his flaw."[45]

Scobie's problem begins with the religious sense of responsibility that he feels for all the miserable and suffering people that enter his life. "He couldn't shut his eyes or ears to any human need of him"(p. 203). Upon his shoulders he places the unbearable burden of securing their happiness. Each one of his relationships is built upon this feeling of pity and upon his prideful belief in his own powers to prevent their suffering. Scobie's pity is the result of a distorted perception and understanding that stretches the meaning of the Catholic commandment to love one's fellow man beyond human limits. Scobie's pity places him in the role of Christ. In this human-divine role he finds an American counterpart in the character of Miss Lonelyhearts, in Nathanael West's 1933 novel of the same name. This personal advice columnist, who receives letters from all the desperate and unfortunate people of New York seeking his advice in alleviating their misery, likewise develops a monstrous pity for suffering humanity that soon overwhelms him. "I've got a Christ complex. Humanity...I'm a humanity lover. All the broken

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44 Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), p. 173. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.

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45 Gene Kellogg, The Vital Tradition: The Catholic Novel in a Period of Convergence (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1970), p. 129. Nathan Scott Jr. makes a similar observation when he writes, "And though his vulnerability to suffering is his virtue, it is also his flaw, for by it he is to be brought to the brink of damnation." "Graham Greene: Christian Tragedian", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, ed. Robert O. Evans (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), p. 139.

bastards...".[46] At the end of the novel, when Miss Lonelyhearts is running to embrace, in the manner of Christ, a cripple who has come to kill him, the narrator implies that he, like Scobie , is destroyed by a pity which tries to embrace the entire world.

> He did not understand the cripple's shout and heard it as a cry for help from Desperate, Harold S., Catholic-mother, Broken-hearted, Broad-shoulders, Sick-of-it-all, Disillusioned-with-tubercular-husband. He was running to succour them with love.[47]

Scobie's sense of responsibility and pity, similarly to that of Miss Lonelyhearts, escalates to universal proportions and therefore indicates a hidden sinful pride at work in him. Scobie, in David Lodge's words, becomes "guilty of a kind of emotional egotism, a compulsion to take the whole world of cosmic suffering on his own shoulders".[48]

> It was as if he had shed one responsibility only to take on another....
> ...If one knew, he wondered, the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? if one reached what they called the heart of the matter?(pp. 126,128)

It is a conspicuous fact that Scobie's pity falls mainly on women and children. As Grahame Smith suggests, even his act of kindness to the Portugese captain, "the first stage in Scobie's disintegration", is triggered by the mentioning of the captain's daughter.[49] The novel suggests that this exclusive, yet instinctive, response of

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46 Nathanael West, "Miss Lonelyhearts", The Collected Works of Nathanael West (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Martin Secker and Warburg, 1975), p. 224.

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47 Ibid., p. 275.

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48 David Lodge, "Graham Greene", The Novelist at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 107.

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49 Grahame Smith, The Achievement of Graham Greene (Sussex: The Harvester Press; New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1986), p. 94.

Scobie's pity is the result of the sudden death of his young daughter, his only child, while she was at school in England and he was at his post in Africa.[50] Louise, his wife, suggests this idea when she accurately explains to him that he is no longer capable of love, but only of a pity for others that is prompted by a sense of Christian duty. "'That's your conscience,' she said sadly, 'your sense of duty. You've never loved anyone since Catherine died'"(p. 59). Another distinguishing characteristic of Scobie's pity is that, in the manner of Miss Lonelyhearts, it is compelled only by the ugly, the weak and the defenceless while the strong and the beautiful who may be in need find no recourse to it.

> He had no sense of responsibility towards the beautiful and the graceful and the intelligent. They could find their own way. It was the face for which nobody would go out of his way, the face that would never catch the covert look, the face which would soon be used to rebuffs and indifference, that demanded his allegiance. (p. 172)

Thus in his predilection for serving unfortunate women and children, motivated by his obsessive feelings of pity and responsibility, Scobie creates and imposes his own insoluble dilemmma. He enters into an affair with a nineteen-year-old widow, a tragic victim of the war, to prevent her further suffering, while at the same time he strives to maintain his vow to preserve his wife's happiness. Scobie is not like the whisky priest in The Power and the Glory, who faces an actual crisis that demands his humble response; he is more like Pinkie, who creates, out of a sense of pride, his own religious crisis. Scobie's crisis is the very product of an evil pride, masked

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50 Smith writes that the death of Scobie's daughter is one of the "key experiences" leading to love for Helen Rolt and that his sudden revelation of his grief "is prepared for by a web of references to children which transforms it from direct statement to an acknowledgement of pain...". Ibid., pp. 94-5.

as a virtue, unnoticeably at work in his conscience as a Catholic. "The devil finds no better aid than the scruples of a Christian", writes Francois Mauriac,[51] and this can truly be said of Scobie. His misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Christ's commandment to love becomes the source of his sin. Scobie, instead of imitating Christ in his human capacity, attempts to replace Christ with himself in the lives of those he meets.

Scobie's catch-22 problem begins when he reaches out in pity to save Helen Rolt from the lascivious advances of Bagster, a morally corrupt Englishman, and to protect her from the impending despair such a relationship would bring. Out of what he calls his love for her, but which is, in reality, a fatherly pity for her frailty, he unites himself with her in an adulterous affair, pridefully imagining such a relationship to be morally superior to a similar relationship with Bagster. At the same time he continues to feel responsible for his wife's happiness and he believes that if she discovered his affair she would suffer irreparably. Therefore he must deceive her at all costs to ensure her happiness. His responsibility to both women is attributed to his love for them. Yet the reader is made aware that it is not love at all. Scobie's love for either woman enjoys no passion, peace, or happiness. Just as the inflicting of pain is the nearest Pinkie gets to the sensation of sexual passion, so is pity the closest Scobie gets to the experience of true passionate love. Early in the novel, as he watches the yellowed face and dark, sweaty hair of his sleeping wife, he is moved to passion for her in his pity for her. "These were the times of ugliness when he loved her, when pity and responsibility reached the intensity of a passion"(p. 16). Later, in

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51 Francois Mauriac, The Inner Presence (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1968), p. 114.

his adulterous affair with Helen, he regards his love-making with her as an unavoidable consequence of his pity and not as the expression of love or sexual passion. "He knew from experience how passion died away and how love went, but pity always stayed. Nothing ever diminished pity"(p. 192). In the depths of his suffering because of his moral dilemma, Scobie begins to question the nature of the love that compellingly drives him on in his sin.

> Do I, in my heart of hearts, love either of them, or is it only that this automatic terrible pity goes out to any human need - and makes it worse? Any victim demands my allegiance.(p. 227)

The situation in which Scobie has placed himself demonstrates the intense irony of his blindness. At the end of the novel one finds that neither women has ever been emotionally dependent on him and that his wife suspected his adultery all along. Only Scobie remains deceived about the vital role he imagines he plays in their lives.

Scobie's self-deception continues until his corrupt pity moves from infidelity to Louise to infidelity to God. In his effort to allay Louise's suspicions of adultery, he must continue to attend daily Mass with her and to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the holy sacrament. This is an act of blasphemy in orthodox Catholicism because Scobie communicates while he is in a state of adultery for which he cannot repent. As he waits to enter the confessional box of Father Rank to confess his sin, hoping for some miracle to release him from his imprisoning predicament, he prays to God to allow him to put the salvation of his soul before the temporal happiness of the suffering humanity he serves.

> He prayed for a miracle, "O God, convince me, help me, convince me. Make me feel that I am more important than that child." It was not Helen's face he saw as he prayed but the dying child who called him 'Father': a face in a photograph staring from the dressing-table: the face of a

> black girl of twelve a sailor had raped and killed..."Make me put my own soul first. Give me trust in your mercy to the one I abandon."(pp. 243-4)

But his false humility does not allow him to confess his sin. He cannot trust God's mercy, only his own. He knows that his sacrilegious acts will damn him, yet he cannot bring himself to sacrifice the happiness of any mortal in order to save his own soul. He will perversely sacrifice his eternal salvation to God in exchange for their earthly happiness and peace, an offering which is made in a parody of the words used in the consecration of the Eucharist.

> But with open mouth (the time had come) he made one last attempt at prayer, "O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them," and was aware of the pale papery taste of his eternal sentence on the tongue.(p. 250)

Even at the realization that he is abandoning God and causing Him to suffer in this sacrilege, he cannot stop the corruption and drive of his pity. "He has betrayed God because Louise and Helen are the realer victims to him", write Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris.[52] The physical and emotional suffering he can concretely witness in others compels his pity more than the suffering of God which he can only imagine, even though these imaginings take the vivid and heartrending anthropomorphic forms of "a bleeding face, of eyes closed by the continuous shower of blows: the punch-drunk head of God reeling sideways"(p. 264) and of "the Child's face" which his sins thrust "into the filth of the stable"(p. 265).[53] Scobie convinces himself that God is strong enough to bear this suffering but that His

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52 Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, The Art of Graham Greene (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), p. 244.

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53 Scobie's belief that his sins cause God to experience actual physical torment and insult finds a similar and powerful description in Julia Flyte's agonized awareness of her adulterous sins in Brideshead Revisited. See Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), pp. 287-8.

creatures are not.

> He was desecrating God because he loved a woman - was it even love, or was it just a feeling of pity and responsibility? He tried again to excuse himself: 'You can look after yourself. You survive the Cross every day. You can only suffer. You can never be lost. Admit that you must come second to these others.' And myself...I must come last...I am conditioned to serve.(p. 248)

Scobie, therefore, resembles Pinkie in the way his faulty theology and sense of responsibility drive him relentlessly on into graver sin just as Pinkie's prideful actions lead him to more killing and eventually to spiritual suicide. It will take the death of Ali to force Scobie to make a decision to end his problem.

Through his own naivete and simplicity Scobie becomes the cause of Ali's death. By mentioning to Yusef that he fears Ali will betray him to Louise, Scobie has half-knowingly ordered Ali's murder. It is Scobie who has betrayed his trusted servant. This sudden realization of his inability to trust his closest friend leads Scobie to see his graver sin of not being able to trust God. In his last revealing monologue, where the tension and meaning of his dilemma reach a climax, Scobie's voice becomes silent as the voice of God takes up the argument. In its own way, this scene is an image of Job, the suffering servant, silenced and instructed by God.

> So now he couldn't keep the other voice silent: it spoke from the cave of his body: it was as if the sacrament which had lodged there for his damnation gave tongue: You say you love me, and yet you'll do this to me - rob me of you forever. I made you with love. I've wept your tears. I've saved you from more than you will ever know; I planted in you this longing for peace only so that one day I could satisfy your longing and watch your happiness. And now you push me away, you put me out of your reach. There are no capital letters to separate us when we talk together. I am not Thou but simply you, when you speak to me; I am humble as any other beggar. Can't you trust me as you'd trust a faithful dog? I have been

> faithful to you for two thousand years...the repentance is already there, straining at your heart....One of them will suffer, but can't you trust me to see that the suffering isn't too great?
>
> The voice was silent in the cave and his own voice replied hopelessly: No. I don't trust you. I love you, but I've never trusted you. If you made me, you made this feeling of responsibility that I've always carried about like a sack of bricks.(pp. 289-90)

The inability to trust is Scobie's sin. He cannot trust God to save man from suffering and therefore he assumes this divine role. Through a love that is nothing more than a perverted sense of pity, and through a misinterpretation of his religious codes, Scobie has reversed the roles of creature and creator. He has placed himself in the position of Christ, ready to accept spiritual death through damnation in order save Helen, Louise, and all the suffering children of humanity. The greatest irony is present in this man who finds no value in himself yet thinks that the happiness and the survival of others rests upon his shoulders. His pity has led from infidelity, to sacrilege, to murder, and in the final stage, to suicide. Scobie, in pride and despair, sees that suicide, which he earlier likened to Christ's crucifixion, is the only solution that will deliver God from further suffering and Helen and Louise from future suffering. As Greene writes of his hero, "Suicide was Scobie's inevitable end; the particular motive of his suicide, to save even God from himself, was the final twist of the screw of his inordinate pride."[54]

Péguy's idea that a man must risk losing his very soul for the love of his fellow man, an idea that appears in all of Greene's major Catholic fiction, is therefore revised in The Heart of the Matter. In the case of Scobie, Greene has shown that such a self-sacrificial act is, at the heart, the action of pity and of pride, not of love.

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54 Greene, Ways of Escape, p. 121.

What is revealed in the tormented Scobie, a man who longed for nothing but peace, is that one must trust God to do the work a mere mortal cannot hope to do. Only God can redeem and transform one's temporal suffering. Anyone who presumes to do this work of God without acknowledging a total dependence upon God's grace and love can only reach the point of despair.[55] Scobie himself is half-knowingly aware of this inevitable end but he is willing to persist in his mortal error.

> He had always been prepared to accept the responsibility for his actions, and he had always been half aware too, from the time he made his terrible private vow that she should be happy, how far this action might carry him. Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim.... Only the man of good will carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation.(p. 61)

Like his predecessor Pinkie, Scobie is unable to make the leap of faith into the mercy of God. He cannot trust in God's love of human beings; he can only trust his own pity for them. His devilish pride, at the root of his good nature, prohibits him from repenting of his sin and from subjecting his will in total sacrifice to God. Scobie is likewise distinguished from Rose in his act of damnation. Where she was willing to die and to suffer damnation for the eternal salvation of another in her humble, subservient love, he is attempting to remove temporal suffering by his death and damnation out of a superior sense of human pity.

The damnation of Scobie through his suicide is not intended by Greene to be a central issue. In his autobiography he claims that the

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55 As A.A. De Vitis writes, "This is Scobie's sin: he prefers to trust himself in his limited knowledge of love, rather than God who is all love....he realizes the immensity of human love, but he fails to recognize the immensity of the mercy of God. His pride and his humility conspire against him, and, because he cannot trust the God he loves, he commits the sin of despair." Graham Greene (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1964), p. 101.

belief in eternal punishment is Scobie's belief, not his own.[56] One reason for this mistaken tendency to emphasize the damnation of Scobie is because the story is seen primarily through his mind. Yet, as Joseph Hynes argues in his essay, the reader understands more than Scobie and sees the story in a broader perspective than in the distorted perspective of his theology and vision.[57] Throughout the novel, Greene also reveals in his protagonist that though pity eats his heart, the essence of that pity is a love that has gone wrong. And if Scobie is motivated to sacrifice his life and soul by a love turned sinful, then Greene suggests in this novel that such a man cannot be deemed entirely guilty of his mortal sin of despair. This is Scobie's personal belief and hope, which he explains to Helen the day before his blasphemous communion.

> "...And then, against all the teaching of the Church, one has the conviction that love - any kind of love - does deserve a bit of mercy. One will pay, of course, pay terribly, but I don't believe one will pay for ever. Perhaps one will be given time before one dies.(p. 231)

A stronger case for Scobie's salvation can also be seen in his final moments of life when the drug he has taken steadily works its way towards his heart. Just as in Brighton Rock, when Pinkie, driving to his death, feels the pressure of the spirit of God pounding against the windows of his car and the walls of his heart, seeking to break in, so does Scobie hear the calling of the spirit before he dies.

> It seemed to him as though someone outside the room were seeking him, calling him, and he made a last effort to indicate that he was here. He got on his feet and heard the hammer of his heart beating out a reply. He had a message to convey, but the darkness and the storm drove it back

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56 Greene, Ways of Escape, pp. 120-1.

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57 Joseph Hynes, "The 'Facts' at The Heart of the Matter", in Contemporary Literary Criticism, ed. Dedria Bryfonski, vol. 9 (Detroit: Gale Researching, 1978), pp. 245-6.

> within the case of his breast, and all the time outside the house, outside the world that drummed like hammer blows within his ear, someone wandered, seeking to get in, someone appealing for help, someone in need of him. And automatically at the call of need, at the cry of a victim, Scobie strung himself to act. He dredged his consciousness up from an infinite distance in order to make some reply. He said aloud, "Dear God, I love..."(pp. 298-9)

This climactic moment of God's call to self-sacrifice, as in Pinkie's case, is shrouded by an atmospheric storm that parallels the spiritual storm within him. The victim Scobie hears is God, whom he has deprived of himself, in the manner of his evil predecessor, by his proud act of despair. What is essentially different between Scobie and Pinkie is that where Pinkie desperately fought against the threat of that Being who sought him out, Scobie responds to His call and seeks to follow it, and that where Pinkie was not able to love, Scobie does love but in a way perverted by a pride masked as humility. Perhaps in the time it takes Scobie to say, "Dear God, I love...", there is enough time to pay for all his sins.

Father Rank, who appears at the end of the novel to console Scobie's widow, like the priest in Brighton Rock, hints at Scobie's possible salvation when he scolds Louise for thinking that her husband's suicide has placed him beyond the hope of God's mercy. "'For goodness sake, Mrs. Scobie, don't imagine you - or I - know a thing about God's mercy....The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart'"(p. 306). Thus one is returned to the original idea that unites these complementary novels. It is the Catholic teaching that, in the battle between the spirit of God and the pride and evil of the human heart, it is the inner struggle and desire to do good, not the actual attainment of that good, that is of primary importance to one's soul. The tortuous

means may well justify the perverse ends in the eyes of the all-merciful God. The intention is all.

Scobie's self-sacrifice, nevertheless, seems a useless, tragic act. His fall from grace is not the result of a selfless love for others but of a selfish pity. His obsessive sense of responsibility and his misconceptions of the nature of God's love and mercy, confuse and compel him to supplant the role God must play in human destinies. His proud pity has placed him above God, and in this impossible human position, he is doomed to failure and despair. Because of this intense pity, Scobie remains blind to the evil nature behind his acts of charity and he refuses to believe that God's mercy is greater than the sins his pity forces him to commit. Scobie's understanding of man in his relationship to God has been distorted, and his trust in God to make suffering play a redemptive role in human lives, has been lost. In short, Scobie has inverted the order of the two great commands to love and, by placing his love of man before his love of God, he becomes destructive to others and to himself. As Gene Kellogg summarises,

> Thus in his portrait of Scobie Greene reversed his great theme. Love of man for his fellow beings is the second command; the first and greatest is love for God "with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind." An ineradicable part of this love of God must be trust, and Scobie does not trust. Greene's theme now is that a man should indeed help and serve his fellow beings, but there are limits beyond which he cannot go, and times when trust in God must replace his own efforts. Scobie's lack of trust is self-destructive, and his ultimate suicide is inevitable.[58]

But Scobie's self-sacrifice is not totally without result. Earlier in the story, Scobie reaches a moment of true compassion, as he sits beside the bed of a girl who is slowly and painfully dying.

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58 Kellogg, The Vital Tradition, p. 135.

He offers to God his peace of mind and heart, the possession he sought to attain most in his life, in exchange for the girl's release from further suffering. His sacrificial offering is accepted; the girl immediately dies and, soon after, Helen enters into his life and his crisis of conscience begins. His final act of suicide, his perverse sacrificial death, also has a direct effect on Helen as it causes her to realize a vacancy within her that she suspects may only be filled by faith. This feeling of vacancy is the first step in the long journey to conversion. Thus, as in Rose's case, Scobie's sin is used by God as an instrument of grace, and in spite of his sin, he, like Pinkie, may find God's mercy when he sought His condemnation. Greene's explication of the theme of self-sacrifice and of the question of salvation and damnation, in these two novels, is therefore perfectly summed up in the words of John Donne:

> Thou knowest this man's fall, but thou knowest not his wrastling; which perchance was such that almost his very fall is justified and accepted of God.[59]

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59 Quoted in Allott and Farris, The Art of Graham Greene, p. 215.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PRIEST AS MARTYR

> That man is perfect in faith who can come to God in the utter dearth of his feelings and desires, without a glow or an aspiration, with the weight of low thoughts, failures, neglects, and wandering forgetfulness, and say to Him, 'Thou art my refuge.'
>
> (George MacDonald Anthology, number 1)

> If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.
>
> (Mark 8.34-5.)

Part I: The Power and the Glory

The theme and act of self-sacrifice reach the ultimate expression of martyrdom in Greene's works in his most publicly - and critically - acclaimed novel, The Power and the Glory (1940). Yet, as with the novels previously discussed, Greene applies a somewhat unorthodox and paradoxical interpretation to this supreme religious act of witness to one's faith in the figure of his whisky priest. The genesis of this novel was the occasion of Greene's commission to write a non-fictional account of the Catholic persecution in Mexico during the winter of 1937-8. Though he had no intention of using his experiences and observations in the writing of a novel, this trip, recorded in his travel journal, The Lawless Roads, was to prove both emotionally unforgettable and spiritually inspiring. It is here, in Mexico, that Greene found the source of his emotional conversion to the Catholic faith as well as the material for a compelling and

realistic human drama. Reiterating the change in his faith brought about by his witnessing of the religious persecution, Greene has stated, "when one has been with believers who suffered for their faith...this endowed the Church with such grandeur, the fidelity of the believers assumed such proportions that I couldn't help being profoundly moved".[1] It is this strength of faith in the Catholic peasants and his stirred religious sensibilities that led Greene to transpose his factual account into a fictional narrative that shows faith, more than any other of his Catholic novels, as a positive and powerful force for good in the midst of a sinful, fallen world.

Yet there is another motive underlying the writing of the novel which is important to one's understanding of the central character. Greene writes that "The Power and the Glory is the only novel I have written to a thesis".[2] The thesis arises out of Greene's impatience with people who could not accept the Catholic belief in the distinction between the person and the office of a priest. Even as a child, as he listened to the "scandalous stories of tourists concerning the priests they had encountered in remote Latin villages (this priest had a mistress, another was constantly drunk)",[3] he logically realized, through his Protestant lessons on Catholicism, the necessity of distinguishing the divine vocation from the human exponent. He grew angry with those who denied the basic humanity of the priest and this anger prompted his desire to show a corrupt humanity alongside an immutable vocation in his characterization of the whisky priest.

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1 Marie-Francoise Allain, The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene (London: The Bodley Head, 1983), p. 155.

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2 Graham Greene, Ways of Escape (London: The Bodley Head, 1980), p. 85.

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3 Ibid.

> I found their indignation exaggerated because, even though I wasn't a believer, I saw no reason why a man should not be different from his function, that he could be an excellent priest while remaining a sinner. I learnt to analyze the paradox of Grace more subtly after my conversion...but the paradox was an integral part of my universe.[4]

This becomes the central argument of The Power and the Glory, but it is by no means confined to this one novel. Greene had initiated this type of characterization in Brighton Rock with the depiction of the wheezing, faltering priest who tries to console and instruct Rose. This conception of the priest in his human weakness also appears in The Heart of the Matter in Fr. Rank, who breaks down in Scobie's presence and expresses his sense of failure and frustration in guiding the faithful, and again in Fr. Clay, who displays a callous insensitivity and intolerance in his orthodox approach to faith. The End of the Affair later continues this presentation of the humanity of the Catholic priest in the abrupt manners and complacent, orthodox attitudes of Fr. Crompton, as does The Honorary Consul in the figure of the married, guerrilla priest, Fr. Rivas. Nor is this depiction of the priest reserved solely for his novels. In his dramatic works one finds the crippled Fr. James, in The Living Room, and later, the faithless alcoholic, Fr. William Callifer, in The Potting Shed. But the priest in each of the novels, with the exception of the guerrilla priest, appears only briefly and emphasis is placed on his official capacity as a representative of the Church rather than on his human capacity and weakness. It is only in the whisky priest that Greene effectively combines the human psychology and personality with the divine mission, so as to make them equally dependent upon each other and therefore equally compelling and dramatic elements in the

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4 Allain, The Other Man, p. 160.

narrative. The central focus of the novel becomes the paradox of the corrupt man transformed by his sacrifice of self to the demands of grace of his vocation, while at the same time the grace of his vocation continues to transform others because of this corrupt man. Thus in his whisky priest Greene does not attempt to defend the dichotomy of man and vocation, but to illuminate and dramatize it.

No other novel by Greene adapts so closely, in its plot and characters, the facts and persons of his direct experiences.[5] Similarly, the oppressive heat, misery, and poverty, and the overwhelming sense of abandonment, that comprise the texture of the setting, correspond to Greene's direct observations and impressions. In the violence, lawlessness, and oppression of Mexico, as well as in the stoic, primitive faith of the people, he sees the incarnation of Newman's vision of the tragic, fallen state of man, and the physical actualization of the borderland between good and evil that he tried to create in Brighton Rock. "Here were idolatry and oppression, starvation and casual violence, but you lived under the shadow of religion - of God or the Devil."[6] It is in this borderland, stripped of God and religion by a progressive, materialistic government intent on social change, that Greene finds both the religious crisis of faith for his novel and the outline sketch of his hero.

> This was Tabasco - Garrido Canabal's isolated swampy puritanical state. Garrido - so it was said - had destroyed every church; he had organized a militia of Red Shirts, even leading them across the border into Chiapas in his hunt for a church or a priest. Private houses were

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5 Except for the protagonist and antagonist, most secondary characters and many incidents in the novel are taken from the raw material of the 1939 journal, The Lawless Roads (London: William Heinemann, 1955). For the models of the English dentist Tench, Mr. Lehr and his sister, and the mestizo who betrays the whisky priest, see, respectively, pp. 132-3, 178-80, 192.

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6 Ibid., p. 234.

> searched for religious emblems, and prison was the penalty for possessing them.... Every priest was hunted down or shot, except one who existed for ten years in the forests and the swamps, venturing out only at night: his few letters, I was told, recorded an awful sense of impotence - to live in constant danger and yet be able to do so little, it hardly seemed worth the horror.[7]

Greene had not found the actual physical representative of the whisky priest or the lieutenant in his travels. While in Mexico, the life of the holy and courageous martyr, Father Pro, was recounted by the Catholic peasants, but this story did not intrigue Greene; only his execution by firing squad was retained in the novel. What intrigued Greene's imagination more was the story of the lonely, impotent figure of a priest mentioned in the passage above and later also described to Greene by Dr. Fitzpatrick, a Scottish Catholic living in Mexico:

> I asked him about the priest in Chiapas who had fled. "Oh," he said, "he was just what we call a whisky priest." He had taken one of his sons to be baptized, but the priest was drunk and would insist on naming him Brigitta. He was little loss, poor man, a kind of Padre Rey [a married priest with a daughter]; but who can judge what terror and hardship and isolation may have excused him in the eyes of God?[8]

From this summary story Greene creates the character of the whisky priest, supplying him with the necessary psychology and personal history. The priest becomes the corrupt human vehicle in whom the sacramental power and grace of God is manifested. Similarly, the lieutenant is not modelled on any actual person. Greene had not found in the police officers he met the same zealous idealism or admirable qualities with which he endows his lieutenant. In order to present an antithesis to the priest that was not simply black against white,

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7 Ibid., p. 129.

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8 Ibid., p. 150.

Greene artificially constructed the figure of the virtuous, well-meaning lieutenant. As Greene explains,

> I had not found the idealism or integrity of the Lieutenant of The Power and the Glory among the police and pistoleros I actually encountered - I had to invent him as a counter to the failed priest: the idealistic police officer who stifled life from the best possible motives: the drunken priest who continued to pass life on.[9]

The plot of The Power and the Glory, therefore, has a dual nature similar to that of Brighton Rock. Yet the external pursuit of the whisky priest by the lieutenant is more completely interwoven with the internal pursuit of his soul by God than it was in the earlier novel. Rather than being treated separately, the melodramatic, physical pursuit becomes the means through which the spiritual pursuit is accomplished. The hardships, suffering, and mortal fear resulting from the government persecution, as well as the characters which cross the priest's path in his desperate escapes, are utilized by God and become the instruments of divine grace that mould and temper the priest's faith. The lieutenant likewise becomes the force or catalyst which confirms the priest in his vocation and leads him to the act of total self-sacrifice to God. Throughout the novel, therefore, the central theme of self-sacrifice is presented in the context of the characters' vocation. The essential nature of a vocation is the call to serve, in a precise way, a truth that is greater and more important than the self. Because of its very nature, the free acceptance of this call necessarily entails the total denial of the self, the sacrifice of the self to one's mission. In both the lieutenant and the priest, this act of self-sacrifice to one's vocation is illumined and defined. But it is primarily in the priest's self-discoveries and self-abandonment, during his journey to martyrdom, the ultimate

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9 Greene, Ways of Escape, pp. 85-6.

sacrifice of his life in his vocation, that the meaning of the novel is found. The priest's response to the call of his vocation therefore forms the dramatic conflict and central theme of the novel, and reveals the proper relationship of man to God.

The conflict between the nameless priest and the nameless lieutenant is not a personal one, but one of general ideologies and spiritual vision. It is a confrontation of Catholic Christianity and an atheistic, materialistic humanism as represented in the main characters. When the lieutenant sees the picture of the man he is hunting in an old newspaper photograph of a first communion party, he sees the image of all the Catholic clergy of his past who exploited and manipulated the poor, ignorant Mexican believers.

> "He looks like all the rest," the lieutenant said. It was obscure, but you could read into the smudgy photograph a well-shaved, well-powdered jowl much too developed for his age. The good things of life had come to him too early - the respect of his contemporaries, a safe livelihood. The trite religious word upon the tongue, the joke to ease the way, the ready acceptance of other people's homage...a happy man. A natural hatred as between dog and dog stirred in the lieutenant's bowels. "We've shot him half a dozen times," he said.[10]

His hatred of the Catholic Church is an instinctive reaction brought about by his childhood experiences.[11] In this way the lieutenant bears a striking similarity to Pinkie in Brighton Rock. As a child, he only witnessed the corrupt power and greed of priests who used the peasants' fear and awe of God to procure a life of ease. Rather than

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10 Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), p. 29. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.

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11 Though Greene has indicated that an absolute model for the lieutenant does not exist, the lieutenant's anti-Catholic feeling resembles that of Garrido Canabal as recorded in The Lawless Roads: "There was no excuse for the persecution in this state - except some obscure personal neurosis, for Garrido himself had been brought up as a Catholic: his parents were pious people"(p. 150).

help alleviate the suffering of the poor, the Catholic priests only contributed to it. Because of this childhood experience of injustice and humiliation, the lieutenant renounces his faith in God and violently reacts against the Church whenever he encounters it in any symbol or representative.

> Something you could almost have called horror moved him when he looked at the white muslin dresses - he remembered the smell of incense in the churches of his boyhood, the candles and the laciness and the self-esteem, the immense demands made from the altar steps by men who didn't know the meaning of sacrifice. The old peasants knelt there before the holy images with their arms held out in the attitude of the cross: tired by the long day's labour in the plantations, they squeezed out a further mortification. And the priest came round with the collecting-bag taking their centavos, abusing them for their small comforting sins, and sacrificing nothing at all in return - except a little sexual indulgence. And that was easy, the lieutenant thought. He himself felt no need of women.(p. 30)

This instinctive hate of the Church and its representatives conditions his attitude and way of life. He adopts the social reforms of the Mexican socialist government as his new god, and the defence and institution of these reforms becomes his vocation. As a counter to the excesses of the clergy, the lieutenant lives a life of strict principle, discipline, and chastity. He is, in reality, more of a priest in the way he lives than the whisky priest he hunts. His personal life resembles, in its bareness and absence of luxury, the life of an ascetic.

> Inside the lieutenant's room there was a bed made of old packing-cases with a straw mat laid on top, a cushion and a sheet. There was a picture of the President on the wall, a calendar, and on the tiled floor a table and a rocking-chair. In the light of a candle it looked as comfortless as a prison or a monastic cell.(p. 32)

The lieutenant despises all weakness and ignorance in himself and his people. Their past, under the corrupt influence of the Church,

is, for him, an abominable nightmare that he, in the manner of Pinkie, would like to erase permanently from his memory and sight. Even music, which he hears while lying in his darkened room, is another sign of weakness, introduced by foreign powers, which he would like to remove from his country.

> It seemed to him like a weakness: this was his own land, and he would have walled it in with steel if he could, until he had eradicated from it everything which reminded him of how it had once appeared to a miserable child. He wanted to destroy everything: to be alone without any memories at all. Life began five years ago.(p. 33)

Though the lieutenant resembles Pinkie in many ways, he is unlike his evil predecessor in the fact that his motivation to destroy his past is not prompted by a selfish egotism, but by a selfless sense of responsibility to his country and people. The lieutenant feels that it is his duty to enlighten his people to the vision of reality that he has discovered. In this way he is, like the hunted priest, a type of religious visionary, but one who confronts the idea of a merciful and loving God with the misery and emptiness of his own experience. "He was a mystic, too, and what he had experienced was vacancy - a complete certainty in the existence of a dying, cooling world, of human beings who had evolved from animals for no purpose at all. He knew" (p. 33). It is this truth, which he feels compelled to assert, that will lead his people to freedom from oppression and suffering. He strives to create a world in which only this moment, this life, is important, with no hope of an eternal life for which to sacrifice one's temporal happiness. The children he sees move him to a type of compassion and it is for them, for their deliverance from superstition and ignorance, that he is willing to sacrifice a whole world.

> He would eliminate from their childhood everything which had made him miserable, all that was poor,

> superstitious, and corrupt. They deserved nothing less than the truth - a vacant universe and a cooling world, the right to be happy in any way they chose. He was quite prepared to make a massacre for their sakes - first the Church and then the foreigner and then the politician - even his own chief would one day have to go. He wanted to begin the world again with them, in a desert.(p. 77)

Thus the lieutenant fashions himself as a Moses figure, willing to lead his people out of oppression and misery, and at the same time willing to hand down the laws by which they can attain their deliverance and maintain their freedom. Like Moses, the lieutenant knows his vision necessitates that he too must one day be willing to sacrifice himself, not only his superiors, before his people enter the new world he seeks to create. Yet, unlike the biblical figure, the lieutenant is not motivated by his love for individual men but by his love for his perfect idea of the state. As K.C. Joseph Kurismmootil writes, "The lieutenant is an idealist of a calibre one meets but rarely. He is entirely dedicated to an idea, his devotion touching on the attitude of worship."[12] It is for the impersonal mass of humanity, known as the state, that he is willing to sacrifice any individual in order to attain his lofty ideals. He does not see the value of each weak or corrupt person, but only the value of a society free from suffering and from the religion he despises. Because of this empty and cold detachment from the people he serves, he does not know how to love them and to become a part of their personal lives. He remains removed from them. His zealous love for his ideals has superseded his love for his people.[13]

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12 K.C. Joseph Kurismmootil, S.J., Heaven and Hell on Earth: An Appreciation of Five Novels of Graham Greene (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982), p. 62.

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13 Kurismmootil describes the lieutenant's inability to love in terms that recall Pinkie. "One's own experience must determine the scope of one's emotions. The lieutenant has himself never known love.

> The lieutenant put out his hand in a gesture of affection - a touch, he didn't know what to do with it. He pinched the boy's ear and saw him flinch away with pain: they scattered from him like birds and he went on alone across the plaza to the police station, a little dapper figure of hate carrying his secret of love.(pp. 77-8.)

The figure of the priest is in direct contrast to that of the fastidious and moral lieutenant. On the run from the Mexican authorities for almost eight years, he is dirty, grizzled, and overweight. He is an alcoholic, drinking brandy for courage, and he has fathered a child. The priest barely remembers the correct formulas for prayers, sacraments and blessings, and having been away from the authority of his bishop and the company of other priests, he has lost all discipline and reverence in his religious observances. He is the perfect image of the spoiled priest:

> ...feast-days and fast-days and days of abstinence had been the first to go: then he had ceased to trouble more than occasionally about his breviary - and finally he had left it behind...Then the altar stone went...The routine of his life like a dam was cracked and forgetfulness came dribbling in, wiping out this and that.(pp. 82-3)

His persecution caused him to despair one drunken night with Maria, but now his desperate situation, his sinfulness, and the presence of his child no longer give him a sense of hopelessness. Unlike Scobie, the whisky priest does not concentrate on his own unworthiness before God, though he is always keenly aware of his sinfulness, but on his mission as a priest, which remains untainted by his moral and spiritual corruption.

The priest is motivated to persevere in his vocation by a similar sense of responsibility to the Mexican people that motivates the

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Nor has he yet loved anybody. The children only stir him to an 'insecure' feeling....He does not know the language of love." Ibid., p. 63.

lieutenant. Yet the manner in which he fulfills his responsibility is vastly different. Unlike the lieutenant, who is willing and content to assume his official duties in serving his ideals, the whisky priest is reluctant and fearful to assume his vocation in serving his people in the name of God. He realizes that, along with the married Padre José, he is the last priest in the state and therefore the sole representative of the Church. The burden of his obligation to continue his ministry so that God, as revealed in the sacraments, should not perish entirely from this land, weighs heavily upon him. But he remains torn in his sense of duty to God which brings with it the threat of punishment and death to all the faithful he serves.

> If he left them, they would be safe: and they would be free from his example...But it was from him too they took God - in their mouths. When he was gone it would be as if God in all this space between the sea and the mountains ceased to exist. Wasn't it his duty to stay, even if they despised him, even if they were murdered for his sake, even if they were corrupted by his example?(p. 89)

In his spiritual aridity and doubt, he nevertheless feels compelled to continue his priestly mission. He must serve, and trust God to care for the fate of his people. The whisky priest, as a result, feels imprisoned by his sense of vocation. Though he has broken his vows as a priest, he remains locked in his commitment "to a faith he has betrayed...yet can never forsake".[14] Early in the novel this imprisoning quality of his vocation is made explicit when he misses another chance to escape from persecution. He realizes that only his eventual capture and death can relieve him of his calling. "He had tried to escape, but he was like the King of a West African tribe, the slave of his people, who may not even lie down in case the winds

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14 Kurt Reinhardt, The Theological Novel of Modern Europe: An Analysis of Masterpieces by Eight Authors (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1969), p. 180.

should fail"(p. 25). Because he cannot willingly renounce his vocation, he feels condemned to be a priest forever.[15]

The priest's relationship to his people through his vocation is likewise different from that of the lieutenant. Where the lieutenant seeks to change the quality of the lives of his people, the priest accepts his impotence in changing human destinies. He will humbly serve the people in their misery. His priestly duty is to help them find redemption in their earthly suffering and thereby avoid a greater, eternal punishment. In the priest's eyes, each person is a creature of God and, as such, contains a value beyond estimation. It is for the soul of each individual man and woman that he is willing to sacrifice his life and his soul. The whisky priest's responsibility to his people is "indistinguishable from love"(p. 90) and therefore contrasts sharply with the lieutenant's love for a dehumanized ideal. The paternal love of the priest for his people is the essential difference that distinguishes and separates the two men. The whisky priest plainly understands this difference when he regards his own daughter Brigitta, whom he loves and whom he wishes desperately to save from corruption, even at the price of his own soul.

> "I love you. I am your father and I love you....I would give my life, that's nothing, my soul...my dear, my dear, try to understand that you are - so important." That was the difference, he had always known, between his faith and theirs, the political leaders of the people who cared only for things like the state, the republic: this child was more important than a whole continent....one must love every soul as if it were one's own child.(pp. 111-12)

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15 This feeling of aridity and imprisonment in his vocation finds a later expression in Father William Callifer of The Potting Shed. "Father, I hate the word....A father belongs to his children until they grow up and he's free of them. But these people will never grow up. They die children and leave children behind them. I'm condemned to being a Father for life." The Collected Plays of Graham Greene (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 120.

A final contrast between the priest and the lieutenant is brought out in the very nature of their vocations. The priest, as a servant of God, becomes the instrument of divine grace regardless of his imperfections and sinfulness as a man. The sacraments pass from him undefiled and unimpeded. On the other hand, since the lieutenant seeks social change rather than spiritual change, he and his fellow officers must be good and honest men themselves, or their mission will fail. Once corruption, greed, or a craving for power enters into the leaders of their social revolution, the revolution will have become simply another form of tyranny. This difference between the religious vocation of the priest and the political vocation of the lieutenant is revealed by the priest during their discussion the night before his execution.

> "It's no good your working for your end unless you're a good man yourself. And there won't always be good men in your party. Then you'll have all the old starvation, beating, get-rich-anyhow. But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward - and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same - and I can give him God's pardon. It wouldn't make any difference to that if every priest in the Church was like me."(p. 263)

Thus, in a real sense, the priest, in upholding the traditions of the Church, presents a more radical revolution than the lieutenant's political revolution. For his Catholic faith demands the total renunciation of the self to God and it is through this self-renunciation that man's injustice and inhumanity to others can be permanently changed.[16] The characterization of the lieutenant in his

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16 Thomas Merton, writing on the Christian tradition and revolution, states this same idea: "This [the Christian tradition] is the most complete revolution that has ever been preached; in fact, it is the only true revolution, because all the others demand extermination of somebody else, but this one means death of the man who, for all practical purposes, you have come to think of as your own self....For the revolutions of men change nothing. The only influence

vocation therefore becomes a foil highlighting the total sacrifice of life and will to God that forms the essence of the vocation of the whisky priest.

The priest originally chose his vocation out of his childhood fear of poverty and suffering. "It had been a happy childhood except that he had been afraid of too many things, and had hated poverty like a crime: he had believed that when he was a priest he would be rich and proud - that was called having a vocation"(p. 92). He is precisely that piously complacent and ambitious priest whom the lieutenant has come to hate with a passion. His ministry before the religious persecution was an easy and self-satisfying one. Surrounded with the trappings of the Church, "preaching at Benediction, organizing the guilds, having coffee with elderly ladies behind barred windows, blessing new houses with a little incense, wearing black gloves"(p. 111), he found that it was a simple matter to direct and save another's soul. But now in this spiritual waste-land devoid of the institution and symbols of the Church, and hunted by the entire government, faith is stripped to its barest, most essential form. The saving of a soul, once "as easy as saving money"(p. 111), now comprises "a mystery"(p. 111) under these appalling circumstances. Deprived of the self-satisfying luxury of his office, the whisky priest is left with the true cross of his vocation. In bearing this cross, he discovers the central mystery of his faith and reestablishes a correct relationship to God. The cross of his vocation teaches him the meaning of self-sacrifice and leads him to his eventual martyrdom.

The transformation of his spiritual pride to a profound spiritual

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that can really upset the injustice and iniquity of men is the power that breathes in the Christian tradition, renewing our participation in the Life that is the Light of men." New Seeds of Contemplation (New York: New Directions Books, 1961), pp. 144-5.

humility is paradoxically accomplished through the sinfulness and moral corruption brought about by his experience of suffering. His original motive for staying in the persecuted state was one of pride. He wanted to be known as the last priest in the region and to be free from the authority and rules of the Church. As he persists in evading the government forces and fulfilling his ministry, he judges all his acts of charity as manifestations of this initial spiritual pride. When he offers his shirt to the mestizo he knows will betray him, his conscience is stirred by an acute awareness of his damning pride.

> This was pride, devilish pride, lying here offering his shirt to the man who wanted to betray him. Even his attempts at escape had been half-hearted because of his pride - the sin by which the angels fell. When he was the only priest left in the state his pride had been all the greater; he thought himself the devil of a fellow carrying God around at the risk of his life; one day there would be a reward....He prayed in the half-light: "O God, forgive me - I am a proud, lustful, greedy man. I have loved authority too much. These people are martyrs - protecting me with their own lives. They deserve a martyr to care for them - not a fool like me, who loves all the wrong things."(pp. 128-9)

The reader is not deceived by the whisky priest's harsh self-condemnation. He alone fails to see his own goodness and love amidst his sinfulness. It is in his deep feeling of unworthiness before God and the people he serves that he begins to understand the true nature of his vocation. During the past eight years of living in spiritual corruption and with a sense of abandonment by God, the whisky priest has developed a more intimate communion with the corrupt sinners he serves. He no longer thinks of himself as morally or spiritually superior to his people, as he did when he was a parish priest. The sins of the flesh which he has committed have broken down the more dangerous, habitual sins of complacency and pride. His sins, as

François Mauriac suggests, have become utilized by God's grace and lead him to his humility.[17] This is the mystery of sin that he begins to comprehend as he looks at the old photograph of himself hanging in the police station.

> It's not very like me now. What an unbearable creature he must have been in those days - and yet in those days he had been comparatively innocent. That was another mystery: it sometimes seemed to him that venial sins - impatience, an unimportant lie, pride, a neglected opportunity - cut you off from grace more completely than the worst sins of all. Then, in his innocence, he had felt no love for anyone: now in his corruption he had learnt...(p. 187).

From his state of sin and his experience of despair "emerged a human soul and love - not the best love, but love all the same"(p. 135). He begins to see the fallen humanity around him as a loving God would. When the man who will betray him asks the whisky priest to hear his confession, the priest is reminded of all the sinners for whom Christ had died and for whom he too is asked to sacrifice his life.

> It was for this world that Christ died: the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death; it was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful, for home or children or a civilization - it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt.(p. 131)

During his journey with the mestizo he reflects upon the central mystery of his faith; that the image of God is found in each corrupt human being. He begins to understand the meaning of the New Testament idea that Christ came to call, not the righteous, but the sinners and the poor in spirit, and that this too is his vocation. In his participation in sin he learns to see all siners as temples of the Spirit of God, no matter how disfigured by pride and sin. That is why

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17 François Mauriac, "Graham Greene", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Samuel Hynes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 76.

he knows the lieutenant's vocation is futile; to rid the world of God you must rid the world of men.

> But at the center of his own faith there always stood the convincing mystery - that we were made in God's image - God was the parent, but He was also the policeman, the criminal, the priest, the maniac, and the judge. Something resembling God dangled from the gibbet or went into odd attitudes before the bullets in a prison yard or contorted itself like a camel in the attitude of sex. He would sit in the confessional and hear the complicated dirty ingenuities which God's image had thought out: and God's image shook now, up and down on the mule's back, with yellow teeth sticking out over the lower lip; and God's image did its despairing act of rebellion with Maria in the hut among the rats.(p. 136).

Finally, when the whisky priest spends the night in a crowded, stinking prison cell filled with murderers, adulterers, thieves, the old and the righteously pious, he finds himself surrounded by a microcosm of the world for which Christ was crucified. In this hellish hole of misery, he can see beauty in the people and in the act of copulation going on around him. The pious woman who was arrested for having "good books"(p. 174) in her house, condemns the sexual act and its participants out of a sense of moral superiority. He tries to explain to her that a love of God necessarily means a love for all these creatures.[18] But his message falls on ears deafened by a prideful piety. The priest finds it more difficult to love this self-righteous woman than the criminals, but he realizes that she too is an image of God. Her hate and sense of spiritual superiority are

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18 Frances McInherny explains the meaning of his message in the following way: "His message to her is the meaning of love, that man must attempt to relate, however meagerly, to his fellow man, that abstract piety and devotion are of no benefit unless put into the perspective of the human condition. Implicit here is the notion that all men are possessed of a capacity for good, for love, and that this capacity is only relevant in the divine interrelationship if it is first subjected to the test of the human condition, with all its attendant shabbiness and squalor." "Some Thoughts Occasioned on Rereading The Power and the Glory", Gleanings from Greeneland (Armidale, N.S.W.: University of New England, 1972), pp. 41-2.

nothing more than her failure to see God in others. In her one sees a reflection of his past religious pride and complacent attitudes.

> When you visualized a man or a woman carefully, you could always begins to feel pity...That was a quality God's image carried with it...When you saw the lines at the corners of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of imagination. He began again to feel an enormous responsibility for this pious woman.(p. 177)

The priest condemns himself for not being able to love all men as he loves his own daughter. He fails to acknowledge that, though he does not love them as the children of his flesh, he does love them as the children of God. It is precisely because of his humble love for God's children that he is able to continue to sacrifice himself in his ministry. Pride alone could not have sustained him during these years of poverty, loneliness, and persecution. There is no longer any honour or self-satisfaction to be gained from his suffering. As he admits, "How little his pride had to feed on - he had celebrated only four Masses this year, and he had heard perhaps a hundred confessions"(p. 129). John Atkins suggests that the priest is sustained in his vocation simply by the force of habit initiated by "the prevalent dullness of his personality".[19] On the contrary, the whisky priest is driven by something outside of his personality and will; he is driven by divine grace. John Atkins is therefore more correct when he writes, in a self-contradiction, that "something that was not himself drove him on".[20]

It is the continuing work of grace, encountered in the people he meets and in the persecution he faces, that causes this "mediocre sinner" to "conform slowly to Christ until he resembles Him...until he

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19 John Atkins, Graham Greene, revised edition (London: Calder and Boyars, 1966), p. 124.

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20 Ibid., p. 123.

identifies himself with his Lord and his God".[21] Grace reveals to him, in his experiences, the mystery of suffering on earth and enables him to pass through the dark night of his total abandonment by God. He discovers that suffering, though undesirable, is the unavoidable and necessary complement to the Kingdom of God on earth. Just as sinners represent the image of God in a negative way, so do pain and suffering represent the peace of Heaven that is to come. The priest realizes that it is suffering which purifies the heart of pride and makes the will dependent upon God. Suffering is the vehicle of grace through which the human spirit is humbled before Him. This mystery of suffering becomes the whisky priest's creed of faith.

> He said: "One of the fathers has told us that joy always depends on pain. Pain is a part of joy....That is why I tell you that heaven is here: this is a part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure." He said, "Pray that you will suffer more and more and more. Never get tired of suffering. The police watching you, the soldiers gathering taxes, the beating you always get...that is all a part of heaven - the preparation. Perhaps without them...you wouldn't enjoy heaven so much. Heaven would not be complete."(pp. 94-5.)

In his revelation and acceptance of suffering, the priest becomes the complete opposite of the lieutenant. For the lieutenant, "Suffering is wrong"(p. 262). He will try at all costs to alter this fate for his people. His attitude is similar to Scobie's in thinking that one can prevent another from suffering. The priest, on the contrary, knows that suffering is inevitable where there is sin and that one is incapable of removing evil and suffering from the world. Only faith and love of God can change human misery.

Despite all his revelations of the mystery of sin, suffering and the image of God within men, the character of the priest is not

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21 Mauriac, "Graham Greene", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 76.

transformed throughout the course of the narrative. His identification with and acceptance of his vocation has been accomplished by the start of the novel. Similarly, the lieutenant's convictions and personality remain stable throughout the novel and only after the death of the priest do they show signs of possible change. This static quality about the characters is one of the failings that Greene himself observes in this novel.

> "The Power and the Glory was more like a seventeenth-century play in which the actors symbolize a virtue, or a vice, pride, pity, etc. The priest and the lieutenant remained themselves to the end; the priest, for all his recollections of periods in his life when he was different, never changed."[22]

It is only through the priest's reminiscences that one sees how he has been changed by the spiritual desert of the persecuted state. Yet his pride, deprived of power by the situation in which he finds himself, is not abolished. It is merely kept in check by his suffering and self-awareness. Thus one sees his spiritual pride revive when he escapes from the persecuted territory to the freedom of the home of the Lehrs. His ambitious and complacent attitudes immediately return in this parish atmosphere and become apparent in his wrangling over the price of a baptism, and in his trite, automatic responses in the confessional. But he cannot escape the call of his vocation, which lures him back to the desert of the godless state and to his total self-sacrifice. The world symbolized by the Lehrs has become to him only a dream; the world of evil and betrayal, to which the mestizo draws him, he realizes is the true reality that purifies him in his vocation. "He had forgotten Miss Lehr completely: the other world had stretched a hand across the border, and he was again in the atmosphere of flight"(p. 240).

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22 Allain, The Other Man, p. 136.

Though the essential character of the priest has not changed, the nature of his faith has. His years of flight have comprised a process of spiritual aridity and emptiness, described by St. John of the Cross, that leads him to a state of humility.

> ...the soul draws from the aridities and voids of this night...spiritual humility, which is the contrary virtue to the first capital sin, which...is spiritual pride. Through this humility, which is acquired by the said knowledge of self, the soul is purged from all those imperfections where into it fell with respect to that sin of pride...for it sees itself so dry and miserable, that the idea never even occurs to it that it is making better progress than others...as it believed itself to be doing before.[23]

In his humility, the priest's faith has reached its true nature, namely, a total surrender of his will to Christ and a total trust in His mercy and grace. The example of his faith becomes the whisky priest's most important act of his ministry, for it is by this act of self-sacrifice and commitment to faith that he directly and permanently influences the lives of others. Thomas Merton's explanation of the internal act of Christian faith accurately describes the unconscious growth of faith in the whisky priest.

> The most important, the most real, and lasting work of the Christian is accomplished in the depths of his own soul. It cannot be seen by anyone, even by himself. It is known only to God. This work is not so much a matter of fidelity to visible and general standards, as of <u>faith</u>: the interior, anguished, almost desperately solitary act by which we affirm our total subjection to God by grasping his word and his revelation of his will in the inmost depths of our being, as well as in obedience to the authority constituted by him....
>
> Our faith is then a total surrender to Christ, which places all our hopes in him and in his Church, and expects all strength and sanctity

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23 "Dark Night of the Soul", <u>The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross</u>, vol. 1, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1947), pp. 388-9.

from his merciful love.[24]

In his renewed faith, his vocation is no longer something outside of himself, but it is the most essential part of his being. He is his vocation. Aside from his vocation he has no meaning, no identity. Thus, by surrendering himself completely to the demands of his ministry, he becomes fully human, and fully free, in the way intended by God. To reject his calling, as he desired to do in his weakness and fear, is to reject his human completion and freedom. As Marie-Beatrice Mesnet explains,

> Man is deeply implicated in God, for it is only in him that he can find his real existence and perfect his self. There is an ontological relationship between man and God, and only in the development of this relationship can the self exist and develop and freedom be found.[25]

Mesnet continues to explain that when men reject this human-divine relationship they are fighting against their very fate and destiny. When they unequivocally accept this calling they enter into the vocation prescribed by God that will fulfill their lives. The priest's total acceptance of his vocation is therefore his acceptance of his destiny which will inevitably lead to his martyrdom.

The priest's vocation therefore is nothing less than his personal cross which he alone must bear. His cross necessarily entails the death, not only of his ego, his intimate sense of self, but also his physical self in his commitment to his faith. Yet this death of the body is only the final sign of the death of his inner self, and it is through this death of self that he fully becomes alive. His martyrdom is the ultimate sacrifice of himself in the witness of his faith and

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24 Thomas Merton, Life and Holiness (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1963), pp. 68-9.

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25 Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 80.

the culmination of his humble underground ministry which was a living and active testimony to his faith. In this final act, freely accepted, the whisky priest completes his identification with the Christ he serves. Thus, once more, Greene presents us with a radical interpretation to a generally accepted concept. It is not the holy and virtuous that become the imitation of Christ but the sinful and corrupt who stand as his image on earth. Like Christ, the priest dies as a scapegoat for the sins of men and his betrayal and death reflect the Passion and Crucifixion.

Though he may be too unworthy to be considered a saint, he is certainly a martyr in the traditional Christian sense as described by W.H. Auden.

> The Martyr is a sacrificial victim, but, in his case, it is he who chooses to be sacrificed, or rather...it is his destiny to be sacrificed and he accepts his destiny. Those for whose sake he sacrifices himself do not choose him as an atoning sacrifice...to them, he is a criminal, a blasphemer, a disturber of the social order...his death is a spectacle, it is not for the spectators a tragic or a sacred but a profane event, the execution of a common criminal. The Martyr does not sacrifice himself for the sake of any particular individual or social group, but for all mankind. In the special case of Christ, the God-Man, he dies to redeem sinful mankind; the ordinary human martyr dies to bear witness to what he believes to be saving truth, to be shared by all men...[26]

Auden continues to outline three general characteristics of martyrdom as it conforms to Christ's model. The martyr must die "alone and forsaken", in "extreme agony and physical humiliation", and lastly, he must seem "to have died to no purpose".[27] The priest's death satisfies each of these categories, yet he himself is especially aware

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26 W.H. Auden, "The Martyr as Dramatic Hero", Secondary Worlds (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), pp. 16-17.

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27 Ibid., p. 18.

of the last. On the morning of his execution, he comes to the conclusion that his vocation, his life, has been totally useless, and that it was simply the result of a foolish spiritual pride. He feels that he has failed God and that he has saved no one's soul, not even his own. He harbours no dreams of glory in his death and he rejects the notion that he will die a martyr. In his eyes he is nothing, and this is all he has to offer to God. The priest feels that he has missed the only real calling of God, which is to be a saint.

> Tears poured down his face: he was not at the moment afraid of damnation - even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him at that moment that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage. He felt like someone who has missed happiness by seconds at an appointed place. He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted - to be a saint.(p. 284)

To the moment of his death, the priest remains blind to his own holiness. He is able to see the image of God in all people, but he is unable to see that same image in himself. He forgives those who persecute and betray him, and who sin against God, but he cannot offer himself this same mercy and love. His humility demands nothing less than saintly perfection and will not acknowledge any act of faith or charity that falls short of that perfection. As St. John of the Cross writes, "...as they progess in humility, the more do they realize how much God deserves of them, and how little is all that they do for His sake; and thus, the more they do, the less are they satisfied".[28] The whisky priest is indeed a sinful and corrupted man, but even in his sinfulness he is still able to make his leap of faith to a complete trust in God. Though he knows he is a slave to

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28 "Dark Night of the Soul", The Collected Works, vol. 1, pp. 354-5.

his sins, he also knows that God's mercy and love are stronger than his sins.[29] He does not despair at his sinfulness, as Scobie does, but rather he is filled with awe at God's power to use him no matter how unworthy he is.

> Now that he no longer despaired it didn't mean, of course, that he wasn't damned - it was simply that after a time the mystery became too great, a damned man putting God into the mouths of men...(p. 83)

The whisky priest's unshakable faith becomes his saving virtue; he had never rejected the call of his vocation as Padre Jose had done. Though corrupted with vices of the flesh, he always remains accessible and open to God's grace. His sins, rather than becoming the source of pride and egotism as they did for Pinkie, become the source of his humility and selflessness. Thomas Merton has written that sin is not simply a refusal to perform, or not to perform, some action, but is a refusal to become whom God intended one to be.[30] By accepting his vocation, his faith, and his total surrender to God, the priest rises to his full human potential in the eyes of God. It is this assuming of his rightful role in relation to God and to man that make the priest a saintly man despite his shortcomings and flaws. For what he does not comprehend at the moment of his death is that no man can make himself a saint. It is only by desiring to serve God more than life itself, and by accepting His will and guiding grace, that man reaches saintly perfection.

If we are called by God to holiness of life, and

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29 As Mauriac writes: "He goes to his martyrdom, having always in his mind the vision of the soiled nothingness and the sacrilege that a priest in a state of mortal sin is, so that he sacrifices himself on attributing to God all of that power and glory which triumph over what he considers the most miserable of men: himself." "Graham Greene", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 76.

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30 Merton, Life and Holiness, p. 4.

> if holiness is beyond our natural power to achieve (which it certainly is) then it follows that God himself must give us the light, the strength, and the courage to fulfill the task he requires of us. He will certainly give us the grace we need. If we do not become saints it is because we do not avail ourselves of his gift.[31]

The whisky priest does avail himself of God's gift and his martyrdom in turn becomes a source of grace that changes the lives of the lieutenant as well as Luis. Following the priest's death, the lieutenant feels an emptiness in his fervour for his ideals, which he assumes will return in time: "...the dynamic love which used to move his trigger-finger felt flat and dead. Of course, he told himself, it will come back"(p. 299). The capture and execution of the priest has not been a victory after all. The lieutenant has gained a deep respect for this humble man who loved his people and his God to the extent that he was willing to die for them. The foundation of his complacent idealism has been shaken by this act of self-sacrifice to the Catholic faith. The change in Luis is an even more conclusive effect of the priest's martyrdom. This boy, who symbolizes the lieutenant's hope of success for his government policies in the future generation, and who rebelled against the romantic notions of faith presented to him by his mother in the story of Juan, the saintly martyr, is converted to faith by the reality of the priest's violent death. Tertullian's words are therefore confirmed: "It is not for nothing that the blood of martyrs is said to be the seed of new Christians."[32] This is Greene's theme fully realized. The sinner has become, in his ardent self-sacrifice motivated by love, the

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31 Ibid., pp. 10-11.

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32 Leonardo Boff, "Martyrdom: An Attempt at Systematic Reflection", Martyrdom Today, ed. Johannes-Baptist Metz and Edward Schillebeeckx, Concilium no. 163, March 1983 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark; New York: The Seabury Press),p. 16.

instrument of God's grace and the image of Christ on earth. Through the humility and martyrdom of one fallen and corrupt priest, the power and the glory of God are manifested and change the lives of men. In this sinner, the makings of a saint are found.

Part II: The Honorary Consul

One of Greene's greatest triumphs as a novelist is his ability to remain topical and to change with current attitudes during each decade of his long and continuing career. Though his early novels bear a distinct resemblance to the works of W.H. Auden[33] and the novelists of the nineteen-thirties[34], he has not limited his later novels to the experiences and ideas of the inter-war years. He has been able to change his perspective, subject matter, and vision with the demands of each successive generation. In an interview he rejects John Le Carre's claim that all his novels "'remain cloaked in the wardrobe of the Thirties'":

> "I think it was a period which marked everybody who was writing at that time - the inevitable approach of war, and so on. But I think I was lucky enough to be able to bridge over into the Fifties and Sixties. I found it difficult, at first, when the war was over, to find what I wanted to do in a novel; I wasn't very happy about The Heart of the Matter, which seemed to me to be a rather exaggerated book. I was trying to find my way into the later period. But I wouldn't say that I was really a Thirties man more than a Fifties man."[35]

Greene has indeed found, as demonstrated in his later novels from the nineteen-fifties to the nineteen-eighties, a passage into the

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33 Walter Allen writes that, though Greene's "preoccupations" are different from Auden's, "He shares with Auden a common symbolism of frontiers, spies and betrayal; and his prose, at any rate, in individual phrases and images, is the nearest equivalent we have to Auden's verse." Tradition and Dream: The English and American Novel from the Twenties to Our Time (London: Phoenix House, 1964), pp. 202-3.

34 A comparison and analysis of Greene in the context of other major novelists of the thirties can be found in Richard Johnstone, The Will to Believe: Novelists of the Nineteen-Thirties (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

35 The Listener, vol. 102, 4 October 1979, p. 442.

post-war era. Each successive novel, beginning with The End of the Affair(1951) and concluding with Monsignor Quixote(1982), retains the indelible marks of Greene's predominant vision of good and evil, contending in a borderland world abandoned by God, and of his recurrent use of the themes of betrayal, pursuit, and religious crisis. Yet, at the same time, these later novels remain open to and influenced by the experiences, events, and attitudes of their respective decades. Moreover, rather than being simply a reflection of present or recent events, Greene's later novels often anticipate future events and ideas. His keen journalistic sense has enabled him to read the signs of the times so clearly that his novels, particularly The Quiet American(1955), as regards the Vietnam War, and The Honorary Consul(1973), as regards the kidnapping of the British Consul in Argentina and the participation of the clergy in terrorist activities, have a predictive or "clairvoyant"[36] quality about them. Greene has allowed not only his ideas but also his narrative style to be continually moulded by the diverse periods in which he lives and writes. Miriam Allott, therefore, rightly contends, on the evidence of his continued productivity and the "topicality of his 'international' subject matter", that Greene can just as easily be considered a representative novelist of each decade in which he wrote.

> His novels span the long period from the tag-end of modernism in the thirties, through the revival of documentary realism of the fifties, to the indulgence in narrative games about the fictionality of the real and the reality of fiction which have become familiar to us since the sixties. The 'topicality' of his first major work in the seventies, The Honorary Consul(1973), derives as much from its manner of reflecting upon the nature of fictions as it does from its use for the plot of a political kidnapping, a form of activism which began to establish itself in those

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36 Miriam Allott,"Graham Greene and the Way We Live Now", Critical Quarterly, vol. 20 no. 3, Autumn 1978, p. 12.

early years of the decade.[37]

In The Honorary Consul, one aspect that most clearly shows the signs of Greene's continued growth with contemporary religious ideas is his conception of his guerrilla priest, who, bearing a strong resemblance to the whisky priest, is now depicted in a post-Vatican II context.[38]

The dark and often subjective theology in the novels so far discussed, that once scandalized the Catholic community of their time,[39] are easily accepted today by the modern Catholic nurtured on a freshly interpreted faith that blends ecumenical and psychological influences with traditional orthodoxy. The characters who once displayed an unorthodox belief, according to the narrow limits prescribed by the doctrine of the Church before the Second Vatican Council, are now accepted as realistic exponents of faith in a complex world. "Characters like the gangster Pinkie or the whisky priest in The Power and the Glory", writes Roger Sharrock, "can now be seen as being at the centre of the Christian experience and not special cases on the fringe of it, shading off into melodrama."[40] The guerrilla

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37 Miriam Allott, "Surviving the Course, Or a Novelist for All Seasons: Graham Greene's The Honorary Consul", The Uses of Fiction: Essays on the Modern Novel in Honour of Arnold Kettle, ed. Douglas Jefferson and Graham Martin (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1982), p. 238.

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38 The Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII, in early 1959, and convened from 1962-5. Traditional Catholic practices and beliefs were reinterpreted in an effort to make them correspond more closely to the needs and experiences of the modern believer. The results of this important council can be found in Documents of Vatican II, ed. Austin P. Flannery (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975).

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39 The Power and the Glory was condemned by the Holy Office ten years after its publication. For a more complete account see Greene, Ways of Escape, pp. 86-7.

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40 Roger Sharrock, Saints, Sinners and Comedians (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Burns and Oates; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 23.

priest, likewise, is regarded as being a central part of the present Catholic experience. In the conception of this character, Greene has carried forward his development of the priest from a man of God who could only speak for the Church, to a man of God who could also speak for his conscience. Greene's earlier, more orthodox treatment of the character of the priest in his novels and plays, therefore, is not deficient in characterization, but a realistic reflection of the time in which they lived. In his autobiography, published two years before The Honorary Consul, Greene comments on the role of the priest in those earlier works when he recounts his experience of seeking the advice of a priest concerning his intention of not having children in marriage for fear that he was an epileptic. The priest, a liberal-minded man, could only speak for the Church; contraception was not permisable on any grounds. His faith allowed him only one response: "'The Church expects you to trust God, that's all.'"

> How differently he would have answered my question today, telling me, I have no doubt, to follow my conscience...Catholics have sometimes accused me of making my clerical characters, Father Rank in The Heart of the Matter and Father James in The Living Room, fail unnecessarily before the human problems they were made to face. 'A real priest,' I have been told, 'would have had something further to say, he would have shown a deeper comprehension, he wouldn't have left the situation so unchanged.' But that is exactly what in those days, before John Roncalli was elected Pope, the priesthood was compelled to do. There was no failure in comprehension....There was only one hard answer...'the Church knows all the rules'...[41]

The guerrilla priest, therefore, also reflects the time in which he was conceived. His liberation theology and his participation in the active struggle for human rights, dignity, and freedom are the reality of the clergy in Latin America, begun in the nineteen-sixties and

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41 Graham Greene, A Sort of Life (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), p. 189.

continuing at the present moment.[42]

The Honorary Consul presents a confrontation of ideologies that complements the confrontation established in The Power and the Glory thirty-three years earlier. The difference between the novels lies in the method with which The Honorary Consul develops this political-religious debate. As Miriam Allott writes, the "terms and procedures" of the latter novel suggest "a transposition of that earlier dialectic into a totally different key (a 1970s key)".[43] Thus there is a strong parallel between the dialogues of Eduardo Plarr and Father León Rivas concerning the relation of politics and religion, and the similar dialogues of the lieutenant and the whisky priest. Yet, more important than the apparent similarities, it is the differences between the characters and the nature of their dialogues that give meaning to the faith of the guerrilla priest. In Father Rivas, we see a whisky priest who has adopted some of the traits of the lieutenant. Rather than passively accept the fate of suffering as the necessary preparation for heaven, Father Rivas rebels with force against the political injustice that has enslaved his people. Like the lieutenant, he will fight to bring about God's kingdom on earth. His character, therefore, represents a new departure for Greene into liberation theology. The issue dramatized in Rivas is , to use J.P. Kulshrestha's words, "the question of political commitment by men of religion who cannot shut their eyes and ears to the reality of the

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42 Unlike the Vatican, Greene accepts this theology which sees no contradiction between Marxism and Christianity, and urges the clergy to take an active, political role as a means for attaining social justice. In a recent article, he was quoted as saying that liberation theology was "a natural growth of the gospels" and that he saw "no logic in the fact that he [John Paul II] is a political pope and yet refuses to let priests be political priests." "Graham Greene returns to his old haunts", The Times, 17 December 1985, p. 5.

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43 Allott, "Surviving the Course", The Uses of Fiction, p. 240.

human situation".[44] Though the guerrilla priest is not the central character of this novel, he is the most important in establishing a new treatment of the theme of self-sacrifice and martyrdom.

Towards the end of the novel, Plarr looks into the face of his boyhood friend, Rivas, and no longer recognizes him. What he sees is a face that shows the confusion and pain of a conscience in agony. "In the innumerable lines of premature age which criss-crossed the face he thought he could detect a tangle of agonies, like a tangle of fighting snakes."[45] This inner torment, prompted by the conflict of his priestly vocation with his political ideals, forms Rivas's religious crisis which leads him to his act of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. As with most of Greene's major characters, León Rivas is moulded by his childhood experiences. In childhood, he grew to hate the power and wealth of his father, who used his influence to stay on the right side of the government when the General came to power. During Rivas's affluent youth, he found himself more attached to the servants of his father's estate than to his parents. Even at that young age he began to feel a stronger communion with and a deeper compassion for the poor. Late in the novel, when Plarr asks him about his father, Rivas explains his childhood sentiments.

> "He was what you would expect, one of the richest of the bourgeoisie in Paraguay. You must remember our house in Ascuncion with the great portico and the white columns and the marble bathrooms and all the orange and lemon trees in the garden?...We had six servants. I liked them much better than my parents. And there was a gardener called Pedro...I was very fond of Pedro, but my father threw him out because he stole a few pesos...My father paid a lot of money every year

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44 J.P. Kulshrestha, Graham Greene: The Novelist (London: The Macmillan Press, 1983), p. 178.

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45 Graham Greene, The Honorary Consul (London: The Bodley Head, 1973), p. 252. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.

> to the Colorado Party, so there was no trouble for him when the General came to power after the civil war. He was a good abogado, but he never worked for a poor client. He served the rich faithfully until he died..."(p. 272)

Rivas's ambition was to become an abogado, a lawyer, like his father, but in the service of the poor. He wanted to sacrifice himself for them in the cause of justice.[46] This desire of self-sacrifice in the defence of the oppressed is mixed not only with resentment of his father, but also with the pervading sense of machismo that infects all the South American characters in this novel. "Machismo - the sense of masculine pride - was the Spanish equivalent of virtus"(p. 11). When Plarr heard about Rivas's decision to become a priest, he felt that Rivas had betrayed his vow and his ambition to serve as advocate for the poor. Yet as Plarr is driven to meet his friend, now a revolutionary hiding in a barrio with his hostage, he feels that Rivas, in breaking his vocational vows as a priest, is returning once more to his original calling.

> León was someone whose word he believed that he could always trust, even though his word seemed later to have been broken when Plarr heard that León had become a priest instead of the fearless abogado who would defend the poor and the innocent, like Perry Mason....
>
> ...he had broken a second vow when he left the Church and married, but that particular broken promise was not one which worried Plarr...León, it seemed to him, was struggling back from a succession of failures towards the primal promise to the poor he had never intended to break. He would end as an abogado yet.(p. 32)

Father Rivas is indeed struggling back to his original purpose.

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46 The life and ambitions of Father Rivas parallel in many respects those of Father Camilo Torres Restrepo of Columbia, a Dominican priest who, because of the injustice caused by the imperial powers and the upper class in his country, willingly sacrificed his priesthood and joined a guerrilla movement called the Army of National Liberation. Father Torres was killed in February 1966 during an ambush of a military patrol by his detachment. See Revolutionary Priest: The Complete Writings and Messages of Camilo Torres, ed. and intr. John Gerassi (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973).

It is a purpose he once felt could have been satisfied and mediated by the priesthood. As a young priest, he thought that he could sacrifice his life in his love for his people, share in their misery and, through his priestly office, work to attain justice on their behalf. But he is disillusioned by the inability of the Church to comprehend the needs of humanity and to serve them. Rivas believes that the teachings of Christ and of the Church are rooted in time and therefore do not understand or address the problems of modern society. Working as a parish priest in the barrio of his native Ascunción, he experiences the frustration and discovers the hypocrisy of preaching the Gospel and the laws of the Church which no longer have any meaning in the present human situation. It is this righteous anger that leads him to forsake the Church he once loved.[47] As he explains to Charley Fortnum, his captive:

> "...you are not able to understand how ashamed I felt of the things they made me read to people. I was a priest in the poor part of Ascuncion...On Sunday I had to read to them out of the Gospels."...
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> "They make no sense," the ex-priest said, "anyway not in Paraguay. 'Sell all and give to the poor' - I had to read that out to them while the old Archbishop...was eating a fine fish from Iguazu and drinking a French wine with the General...The words used to stick on my lips - 'Suffer little children', and there the children sat in the front rows with their pot bellies and their navels sticking out like door knobs....and then I distributed the Host - it's not so nourishing as a good chipa - and then I drank the wine. Wine! Which of these poor souls had ever tasted wine?"(pp. 143-4)

The problem of the modern, socially-conscious priest, at odds with the stagnant orthodoxy of the Church, is also the subject of Thomas Keneally's Three Cheers for the Paraclete(1968), and Father

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47 Father Torres's epigraph to his collected writings aptly sums up Rivas's decision: "I took off my cassock to be more truly a priest." Revolutionary Priest, p. 9.

Rivas has many similarities with Father James Maitland, the protagonist of that earlier novel. Maitland, like Rivas, finds the Church to be outdated in its orthodox teachings and inhuman in its treatment of people. His loss of faith in the institution that has nurtured him, likewise leads Maitland to perform acts that are not condoned by the Church. Yet, unlike Rivas, Maitland does not have a new theology, or a new vision of God, to replace the old. He is caught in a limbo between the orthodox Church, in which he no longer believes, and a new belief which he has not yet formulated. When he dreams at night, he visualizes God as a surgical trolley on which he lies in his own blood. This dream becomes an appropriate image of the loneliness, emptiness, and uncertainty of living in this state of transition between beliefs. "So he suffered the cold of the trolley with some detachment, knowing that men who are in transition between gods must expect unquiet rest."[48] Maitland also differs from Rivas in not opting for a theology and belief that is outside of the Church. Where Rivas is not content to wait for the Church to change its archaic doctrines and passive attitudes of social commitment, and leaves the Church to fight for the realization of the kingdom of God on earth, Maitland decides that he must wait, within the institution of the Church, for its ideas to change. If Maitland requires a new concept of God and an evolved interpretation of the Church's laws, to make them alive with truth for the present age, then he must work for this transformation from within the existing framework of orthodoxy and not seek change from without. The outdated, inhuman traditions of the Church cannot simply be discarded; they must be redeveloped and renewed internally. As Maitland explains to Edmonds, a seminarian:

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48 Thomas Keneally, Three Cheers for the Paraclete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 12.

> "I'm an institutional being. I have been from childhood. My one hope is to wait for my institution to re-establish some contact with the...living truth again, that's all. Some individuals - mystics, prophets, saints - outgrow institutions. But I never will, unless I become a mystic or prophet or saint. And there aren't any indications....But I have to wait for the revelation within this framework."[49]

But Rivas is incapable of this decision because of the oppressive situation in which he and his people find themselves. There is not time to wait patiently for the slow revision of the Church from within. Radical changes are needed immediately and they must come from without. He must transcend his religious vocation which has become a barrier that limits his actions and separates him from the people he longs to serve. Even his vestments, the outward signs of his divine office, become for him a painful reminder of his division from the reality of the poor.

> "How I hated wearing them when the people in front of me were all in rags. I was glad to turn my back on them and forget them and see only the altar and the candles - but the money for the candles would have fed half the people there."(p. 282)

Unlike the whisky priest and Father Maitland, he cannot accept his inability as a priest to change another's suffering. He is like the disciples who castigate the woman for using expensive perfume to annoint Christ's feet rather than selling it and using the money to help the poor,[50] only in his case he castigates the Church for her wealth and inactivity. He cannot stand by idle, performing the rituals of the sacraments, and praying for the deliverance of his people from their misery, without actively fighting for that deliverance. Suffering, to him, is not the means of purification for

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49 Ibid., p. 205.

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50 See Matthew 26:6-13.

the kingdom of God, as it is for the whisky priest, but it is a man-inflicted evil, permitted by God, that must be violently opposed if necessary. In this way, he finds companionship with the idealistic lieutenant. Politics and religion, in this novel, have become one. As Grahame Smith writes,

> Part of The Honorary Consul's distinction lies in its fusion of these interests. Greene's setting and choice of subject-matter are skilfully contrived to weave religion and politics into a unified whole. The moral issues of kidnapping and political murder are combined with a questioning of the social and spiritual role of the Roman Catholic Church in a debate that combines a high degree of seriousness with fictional excitement.[51]

As a young seminarian, Rivas suspected the basic hypocrisy and outdatedness underlying the institution of the Church, but he never suspected that their disagreement of purpose and belief would eventually lead to the end of his vocation. When Plarr presses the question of whether Rivas knew from the start that his vocation would not last, Rivas responds adamantly.

> "No. I never believed that. Not for a moment. I thought the Church and I wanted the same thing. You see I had been very happy in my seminary. You might say that was the period of my honeymoon. Only there were occasions...I suppose it happens in the same way in all honeymoons...there was a hint that something might be wrong...Oh well, I used to think, a little difference of opinion, what does it matter? In the end a man and wife grow together. The Church will grow nearer to me as I grow nearer to her."(p. 274)

But his difference of opinion only deepens until, in his final disillusionment, he separates himself from his bride, the Church. Rivas loses his faith in the institution that he once loved and from which he derived his basic ideals of love and notions of humility and

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51 Grahame Smith, The Achievement of Graham Greene (Sussex: The Harvester Press; New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1986), p. 181.

self-sacrifice. His conscience, angry with the limitations and hypocrisy that he finds in his vocation and that alienate him from the poor, overrides the authority of the Church, that demands his total obedience.[52] He feels he has been betrayed; the Church, his bride, has been unfaithful in her promises. Rivas therefore marries Marta, not out of lust and human weakness, but out of "anger and loneliness"(p. 142) and to have "something to guard"(p. 126) in place of his faith in his Church. His mortal marriage completes his excommunication as a priest. Yet this separation from the Church, though mutually desired, is not his total severing from faith. As he tells Plarr,

> "...I never left the Church. Mine is only a separation, Eduardo, a separation by mutual consent, not a divorce. I shall never belong wholly to anyone else. Not even to Marta."(p. 274)

Rivas, therefore, cannot bring himself to hate the Church that has betrayed him in his beliefs. He can only feel regret that his holy spouse could not have used him in the work of forcibly bringing the kingdom of God into existence on earth. "'I think she could have used me easily for a good purpose if she understood a little better. I mean about the world as it is'"(p. 275).

Rivas adopts the new vocation of revolutionary, resorting not to peace and love, but to terrorism and murder as the means to change the reality of his evil world. It is in this violent vocation that he

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52 This echoes Father Torres's reasons for leaving the priesthood: "...I have resolved to join the revolution myself, thus carrying out part of my work of teaching men to love God by loving each other. I consider this action essential as a Christian, as a priest, and as a Columbian. But such action, at this time, is contrary to the discipline of the present church. I do not want to break the discipline of the church, but I also do not want to betray my conscience." Revolutionary Priest, pp. 334-5.

will risk his life for the people and the truth he serves. Yet Rivas, the ex-priest, remains uncomfortable in his new vocation. His new methods do not sit well with the Gospel he no longer believes, but nevertheless, cannot forget. At the beginning of the novel, Rivas, a master of semantics who could once define the nature of the Trinity to Plarr, tries to disguise the reality of his brutal tactics by playing with words. "'I try not to think in those terms [murder], Eduardo'"(p. 38). But the reality of his actions is constantly brought home to him by Plarr's relentless inquisition. Defensively, Rivas rationalizes his terrorist activities by claiming that the revolutionaries are given no other choice of action. "'We have not chosen our method. They have reduced us to this'"(p. 42). Thus, in order to overcome oppression, they are forced to imitate the tactics of their oppressors. This forms the inevitable contradiction in the moral basis of their actions that ultimately torments Rivas's religious conscience. His intention is to preserve life, to prevent further persecution and oppression, but to accomplish this, he is resolved to take lives. The ethic behind his resolution is explained in the words of Father Torres:

> "...if Christianity is concerned with eliminating the serious evils which we suffer and with saving us from the continuous violence in which we live without possible solution, the ethic is to be violent once and for all in order to destroy the violence which the economic minorities exercise against the people".[53]

Father Rivas's responsibility to save Fortnum's life is therefore superseded by his commitment to save the lives of past and future political prisoners, and to avoid further bloodshed on the part of the revolutionaries.

"We cannot afford to fail. Once before our people

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53 Revolutionary Priest. p. 35.

> released a man rather than kill him...If we are weak again like that, no threat of death will be of any use on this continent. Until more ruthless men than we are begin to kill a great many more. I do not want to be responsible for the deaths which will follow our failure."(pp. 279-80)

Like the whisky priest, Rivas is ready to die for his revolutionary vocation, but rather than bringing peace, patient suffering, and humility, he brings a sword.

Though Father Rivas has lost faith in the Church, he has retained his faith in God. In the same way that Rivas remains a priest forever, despite his separation from the Church, so does he feel compelled to believe in God despite His absence from the world. Faith, to him, is a natural and compulsory action. There is no resisting it. Like the whisky priest who felt a captive of his priestly vocation, Rivas feels a prisoner of his faith.

> "Some men, I think, are condemned to belief by a judge just as they are condemned to prison. They have no choice. No escape. They have been put behind the bars for life."(p. 283)

What Rivas has lost, therefore, is not the spiritual gift of faith, but his rational belief in the human institution of the Church. This distinction between faith and belief is one that is clearly held by Greene in his personal life and his explanation of their intrinsic differences is enlightening in view of the character of Father Rivas. As Greene states,

> "There's a difference between belief and faith. If I don't believe in X or Y, faith intervenes, telling me that I'm wrong not to believe. Faith is above belief. One can say that it's a gift of God, while belief is not. Belief is founded on reason. On the whole I keep my faith while enduring long periods of disbelief....My faith remains in the background, but it remains."[54]

So it is with Father Rivas. Though disillusioned by the Church, he

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54 Allain, The Other Man, p. 173.

still half believes in it, and in his rational doubt there always remains his faith in God. But Rivas's faith has taken on a different theology from that expressed by the orthodox Church. His God has become a personal one who is a mixture of both good and evil, God and devil.

In the scene most reminiscent of the dialogue between the lieutenant and the whisky priest, Plarr, the faithless Catholic, discusses the theology of Rivas, the terrorist priest. Yet in this instance, the dialogue is not obviously pedantic or moralizing, contrasting a religious vision with an atheistic, political one, as in the earlier novel, but it is more the expression of the inner conflict of the priest struggling to make sense of his faith in the light of his experiences of life. Rivas's faith in God and love for his people, as in the case of the whisky priest, stem from his profound understanding that all men are made in the image of God. But Rivas reverses his interpretation of this belief. Instead of seeing divine goodness in the most corrupt of men, he sees man's corruption as a part of God's being. Man, in his goodness and evil, is the precise image of God in His goodness and evil. Since God is the creator of all men, then He is also the creator of the evil that lies within their hearts, and for this Rivas holds God responsible. Even the murder he will be forced to perform he attributes to God. "'He made me what I am now. He will have loaded the gun and steadied my hand'"(p. 276). But God, like man, is evolving. God is slowly moving away from the evil within His nature, to a state where only His perfect goodness will manifest itself.

> "I believe in the evil of God...but I believe in His goodness too....He made us in His image - and so our evil is His evil too. How could I love God if He were not like me. Divided like me. Tempted like me....

> ...The God I believe in must be responsible for all the evil as well as for all the saints. He has to be a God made in our image with a night-side as well as a day-side. When you speak of the horror, Eduardo, you are speaking of the night-side of God. I believe the time will come when the night-side will wither away, like your communist state, Aquino, and we shall see only the simple daylight of the good God.(pp. 284-5)

Rivas's God ultimately resembles man in his present state. God's evolution towards absolute goodness is determined by man's evolution towards saintly perfection. Each good act of man furthers God's progress.[55] When Plarr is sceptical about man's moral evolution, citing Hitler and Stalin as evidence that man is actually moving backwards, not forwards in his progress, Rivas remains unshaken in his convictions because of his belief in Jesus Christ. Christ, the man-God, was the one moment of perfect goodness on earth and his death and resurrection have ensured the redemption of both man and God. If Christ could once exist, then he can exist again in human reality, and it is to this eventual perfection, when the beast of evil within human and divine nature has been overcome, that man and God slowly move in their pain and suffering.

> "But I believe in Christ," Father Rivas said, "I believe in the Cross and the Redemption. The Redemption of God as well as of Man. I believe that the day-side of God, in one moment of happy creation, produced perfect goodness, as a man might paint one perfect picture. God's good intention for once was completely fulfilled so that the night-side can never win more than a little victory here and there. With our help. Because the evolution of God depends on our evolution. Every evil act of ours strengthens His

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55 Ray Snape sees the influence of Teilhard de Chardin in Rivas's theology of evolution: "Not surprisingly the ideas with which Rivas seeks to reconcile the existence of good and evil with belief in a benign divinity owe much to Teilhard de Chardin's attempts to reconcile belief in scientific evolution and progress (which involves the notion that human beings are imperfect and that evil may, therefore exist) with religious faith. "The Political Novels of Graham Greene", The Durham University Journal, vol. LXXV no. 1, December 1982, p. 81.

> night-side, and every good one helps His day-side. We belong to Him and He belongs to us. But now at least we can be sure where evolution will end one day - it will end in a goodness like Christ's. It is a terrible process all the same and the God I believe in suffers as we suffer while He struggles against Himself - against His evil side."(p. 285-6)

Greene thought he had achieved a new theology in the creed of his guerrilla priest, but later found that these liberal ideas concerning the nature of God were still compatible with Catholic doctrine.[56] Rivas, himself, still maintains that he is a Catholic and that his belief about the dual nature of God does not contradict any of the established Church teachings: "'...the catechism is not the faith, Marta....There is nothing I have said which your catechism denies'"(p. 287). Nevertheless, Rivas realizes that his methods of terrorism, used to bring about God's perfection on earth, are, in reality, slowing down that evolutionary process. Violence is a negative force, an evil, which defeats the purpose of achieving good. Yet he feels driven to this method. He has no choice in the matter. Like Saint Paul, whom he compares with himself in this situation, he is compelled by his lower nature to do actions which he despises.

Rivas therefore finds himself at a crossroads, faced with a murder he is resolved to commit in the name of justice, and his priestly vocation that demands his passive suffering and his humble obedience. In a sense, his night-side and his day-side are at war. Convinced of his revolutionary ideals and love for his people, he cannot escape his sacred vocation that still claims him. This is the moment of his crisis of faith that demands his total self-sacrifice. The torment of conscience, which has raged throughout the kidnapping and bargaining with the authorities, has reached a moment of climax.

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56 See Allain, The Other Man, p. 165.

When Marta, an instrument of God's grace, persistently and humbly pleads with Rivas to reassume his priestly office and to say a Mass before they are killed by the government soldiers, he cannot resist this call to his priesthood. He is a priest forever, and he must serve. Only he can pass on the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, even though he may have lost his belief in the Church that has conferred on him this sacramental power. Threatened with imminent destruction, Rivas celebrates "the rites of a religion of hope", in the manner of the whisky priest, "without ecclesiastical trappings, without intellectual assurance, but persisting along the road of choice and the assent of will".[57] The sacrifice of the Mass therefore becomes the external sign of his inner self-sacrifice and reconversion to his vocation.[58]

Thus in his final consecration of the Eucharist, Rivas has evolved to the full acceptance of his role and duty as a priest. He has reestablished his correct relationship to God, and to his people, in his total re-submission to his vocation for their sakes. Earlier in the novel, Rivas had refused to go and bless the body of an old woman who had just died. In his political convictions, he could not risk the lives of his fellow revolutionaries, or his own, by exposing himself in public as a priest. Now that their deaths seem inevitable, his responsibilities as a terrorist are relaxed and he can sacrifice himself in his priestly function. Though he still claims until the last moment that he will kill the Honorary Consul, should the

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57 Sharrock, Saints, Sinners and Comedians, p. 249.

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58 In Catholic doctrine, the external sacrifice is always a sign of the more important, internal sacrifice of the heart. "The symbolical meaning and value of the visual sacrificial offering lies in its power to express the interior spirit of sacrifice and submission of the person." Richard P. McBrian, Catholicism, vol. 1 (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1980), p. 301.

authorities refuse their demands, he knows within himself that he is incapable of taking another's life. By the end of the novel, his priestly vocation takes precedence over his political ideals. When Plarr is shot by the paratroopers, Rivas instantly runs to him out of his sense of religious duty to offer him a last confession, even though he knows he runs to his certain death. To Aquino's argument that he should shoot Fortnum before attending to Plarr, he replies, "'Aquino, for a priest there are always priorities'"(p. 327). He has reached the point where he can now die for his faith and for his fellow man. Rivas's evolution from a political terrorist, serving the cause of justice, to a priest of God, serving man in the imitation of Christ, is complete.[59] As both men lie dying, Rivas is heard saying his final confession, asking for forgiveness of his sins and, ironically, it is Plarr who says the words of absolution. In this final act of contrition, Rivas, like his predecessor the whisky priest, has reached a state of humility before God and his vocation.

The death of Father Rivas, brought about, ultimately, by the violent and aggressive manner of his witness to his faith, presents a new and expanded interpretation of martyrdom. Traditional martyrdom, as in the case of the whisky priest, "is the free, tolerant acceptance of death for the sake of the faith".[60] According to the Catholic Church, this concept covers only those whose peaceful witnessing of their faith leads them to a death which they passively accept, but did not actively seek. Those whose faith brings them into an active conflict that leads to their death are denied the traditional title of

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59 Greene regards The Honorary Consul as his favorite book precisely because all three main characters evolve during the course of the novel. See Allain, The Other Man, p. 136.

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60 Karl Rahner, "Dimensions of Martyrdom: A Plea for the Broadening of a Classical Concept", Martyrdom Today, p. 9.

martyr. As Karl Rahner explains, "What is specific about this concept is that as far as the Church is concerned today it excludes death in an active struggle."[61] Rahner suggests that, in the light of the Latin-American struggle for freedom from oppression, led in many instances by men of faith, the distinction between the two types of deaths resulting from the contrary methods of witnessing to the faith, can be bridged under the one concept of martyrdom without losing their distinction. There is evidence to indicate, claims Rahner, that a passive witnessing of faith is, in a sense, a conscious, active struggle against opposing and persecuting ideologies, just as Christ's ministry presented an active struggle with the contemporary religion and politics of his day. Similarly, an active witness to the faith does not pursue death but, like the passive witness, pursues a life of faith and accepts death as an inevitable end to his quest for justice and truth.[62] Thus, in the light of this interpretation, the continued, non-violent vocation of the whisky priest comprises his conscious rebellion against the ideology of the lieutenant. His ministry constitutes an active witness to his faith in the same manner as Father Rivas's ministry, which assumes the active role of fighting for human liberation and dignity based on his faith in God. Though their methods of fulfilling their vocations are completely opposite, the underlying substance of faith motivating them is similar, and in this way the guerrilla priest, like the whisky priest, becomes a true martyr.

There also arises the contention that Father Rivas is not a martyr in the category of the whisky priest, because he fought for political justice and not specifically for the Christian faith. But

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61 Ibid.

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62 Ibid., p. 10.

W.H. Auden reminds one that martyrs need not be those who died in defence of faith, but those who died in the cause of any truth.

> The history of the Christian Church...has taught us that we cannot reserve the title of martyr for those who die for beliefs that coincide with our own, that a man who dies to bear witness to dialectical materialism is no less a martyr than one who dies to bear witness to the Nicene formulae. One can say, however, that it was Christianity...that first recognized the martyr as a classifiable type.[63]

Nevertheless, many modern theologians now find priests such as Father Rivas to be martyrs in the Christian sense as well as in the general one described by Auden. They consider the fight for peace, truth, and human justice to be a fight for the very essence of God on earth. Saint Thomas Aquinas is cited as one of the first to formulate this idea that any action of human compassion and concern is likewise an action affirming the Spirit of God and therefore can become the cause of martyrdom in the Christian sense. As Aquinas writes, "Human good can become divine good if it is referred to God; therefore any human good can be a cause of martyrdom, in so far as it is referred to God."[64] Leonardo Boff explains that this "reference" to God is not limited to a conscious act or commitment of faith, but is necessarily implicit in any action which furthers the cause of peace, truth, and justice. In his broadened definition of the concept of martrydom, which includes actions that, by their very nature, imitate and rekindle the Spirit of God, Boff accurately defines the martyrdom of Father Rivas as well as of Plarr and the other revolutionaries who sacrificed themselves in their struggle for their fellow man. For Boff writes that

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63 Auden, "The Martyr as Dramatic Hero", Secondary Worlds, p. 17.

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64 Leonardo Boff, "Martyrdom: An Attempt at Systematic Reflection", Martyrdom Today, p. 14.

> ...true faithfulness to God - and this in the end is what counts for salvation - is faithfulness to truth, justice and the requirements of peace. Therefore, all those who have died, and those yet to die, for these causes, regardless of their ideological allegiance, are truly martyrs through the spilling of their blood because they perform virtuous actions in the Spirit of Christ. They are not martyrs of the Christian faith, not heroes of the Church; they are martyrs of the kingdom of God, martyrs to the cause that was the cause of the Son of God when he was in our midst. They help to carry out God's policy in history.[65]

With the character of Father Rivas, therefore, Greene is in the forefront of the changing attitudes of the Church and the liberation theology of some of its clergy and theologians. It is true that Greene's intention in his conception of the guerrilla priest is to present, not a dogmatic defence of or apology for a particular type of theology, but to present the human drama of a man caught in the tension of his vocation, one that demands allegiance to the policies of the orthodox Church, and of a personal faith that compels him to participate in the active struggle for the rights and freedom of his people. Yet, in addition to Greene's artistic intentions, the controlled combination of politics and religious faith in his guerrilla priest anticipates the future enlargening of the active role of the Church in the affairs of governments. In Father Rivas, Greene extends the traditional interpretation of self-sacrifice and martyrdom to include the sacrifice and death incurred in the violent struggle to make the kingdom of God a reality. Father Rivas therefore reflects the humanity and faith of the modern priest who actively fights for human justice because of his religious convictions.

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65 Ibid., p. 15.

Part III: Monsignor Quixote

The political-religious debates that form the key, underlying themes in The Power and the Glory and The Honorary Consul come to the foreground in Monsignor Quixote(1982). In this novel, the dialogues between Monsignor Quixote and the Marxist ex-Mayor, Sancho, reminiscent of the similar confrontations between the whisky priest and the lieutenant, and Eduardo Plarr and Father Rivas, now dominate the action of the novel. Their dialogues, which continue throughout two journeys, become more important and meaningful than any of the events and mishaps which befall the two men. Yet this novel is not simply a discussion of contrary beliefs by insubstantial and impersonal spokesmen. Rather, as Roger Sharrock writes, "it is two flesh-and-blood characters who argue, however, not abstract representatives of two 'points of view'".[66] Their discussions about the nature of Marxism and of Christianity, and of the nature of belief in general, become poignant expressions of personal experience and vision, and not merely ideological theories. It is precisely his personal experience and vision of faith which leads the Monsignor to sacrifice himself completely in its defence.

With this novel Greene has once again demonstrated his versatility as a writer by presenting the ideological confrontation of his earlier Catholic novels in a radically different manner. The comic elements that began to appear with increasing frequency in his fiction of the sixties and seventies have become dominant in Monsignor Quixote. Yet the humour that colours the atmosphere of this short

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66 Roger Sharrock, Saints, Sinners and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Burns and Oates; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 270.

novel is often of a dark and serious variety, pointing out the ironies, inconsistencies, and failings of the characters and their beliefs, and of the world of fallen man in which they live. Greene's serious comedy, therefore, is quixotic in nature: a mixture of the tragic and comic, and based upon the conflict of the real and ideal, fact and fiction.[67] As he explains in his autobiography:

> ...at the end of a long journey, without knowing myself the course which I had been taking, I found myself, in A Visit to Morin and A Burnt-Out Case, in that tragi-comic region of La Mancha where I expect to stay.[68]

Besides this new venture into the realm of comedy, the very style of his narrative also marks a departure from the techniques he employed so successfully in his earlier fiction. In this novel, melodramatic events, as well as his use of powerful images and metaphors, have been virtually eliminated. The narrative stands upon a simple and direct language, stripped of any complex imagery, that evokes a deeper, more profound meaning and story in its very simplicity. Greene continued to purge his language, writes Sharrock, in order "to eliminate self-consciousness" and "to point to experience of which language cannot speak directly".[69] The effect of this unadorned language is similar in many respects to that of John Steinbeck in The Pearl and Of Mice and Men, where a moving portrayal of a universal theme and experience is present beneath a surface of bare words and an uncomplicated plot. The important difference in the language of Greene to that of Steinbeck is that sentimentality is removed from his expression of emotion. The commonplace events

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67 See Sharrock, Saints, Sinners and Comedians, pp. 178-80.

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68 Graham Greene, Ways of Escape (London: The Bodley Head, 1980), pp. 258-9.

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69 Sharrock, Saints, Sinners and Comedians, p. 274.

recorded in Monsignor Quixote, as a result, contain a depth of meaning in the same way in which the simple words and actions of the mass contain within them an infinite depth of meaning. As Sharrock correctly observes, "But one is struck by a transcendence of the ordinary by the ordinary, a ritual aspect."[70] Yet, more than either of these changes in genre and style, it is the restructuring of the confrontation of Communism and Christianity in the persons of Father Quixote and Sancho that sets this novel apart from its predecessors The Power and the Glory and The Honorary Consul.

Monsignor Quixote and the ex-Mayor do not meet as adversaries but as equals and as friends. They are both "survivors" of institutions that have betrayed their faith and trust: "one Catholic in spite of the Curia" and "one Communist who is still alive in spite of the Politburo".[71] Each has also encountered betrayal and hatred within the ranks of their respective associations; the Mayor lost his bid for reelection because of the conspiracy of three local members of the Communist Party and the Monsignor is being driven from his parish by a bishop who dislikes him and his well-intentioned, though unorthodox, practices. The central conflict of the novel, therefore, is not one of opposing ideologies but one of disparate views between individuals of the same faith. Because each man is suppressed by his institution but finds freedom and peace in the other's presence, a new tone emerges in the exchange between the Monsignor and Sancho. Adhering to their opposing doctrines, they nevertheless express a tolerance and respect for each other's beliefs and soon come to see the inherent similarities of their differing faiths. No proselytism is practised

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70 Ibid., p. 275.

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71 Graham Greene, Monsignor Quixote (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 204. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.

and no conversion is sought by either man; rather, a mutual acceptance and understanding is fostered between them. The charity and compassion they extend to each other have overcome any ideological differences the Monsignor and the ex-Mayor may have had. Their discussions succeed in linking, as John Spurling writes, "the insensitivity and authoritarianism of the organized church to those of organized Marxism" and in revealing that, as "good" men in their respective faiths, "they are clearly closer in many ways to each other than either is to his nominal party".[72] This joining of Communism and Catholicism in their growing friendship is the very hope expressed by the Monsignor in his waking dream: "the dream of a deepening friendship and a profounder understanding, of a reconciliation even between their disparate faiths"(p. 66).

The search for Monsignor Quixote, which forms the underlying plot of the novel, is executed by the authorities of the Church and of the State; the former is represented by the bishop and Father Herrera, who do not condone the Monsignor's Gospel inspired, pre-Vatican II sentiments and practices, and the latter is represented by the Guardia Civil, who are wary of leftist sympathies like those of the ex-Mayor. The authorities in each case only "judge by appearances"(p. 91), never taking into consideration the intention of the heart behind the action. Both men, as a result, have become fugitives from the established institutions of Church and State by harbouring beliefs that are contrary in spirit to the modern tenets of religion and politics. By the standards of the authorities, Monsignor Quixote and Sancho live their lives in accordance to the outdated notions of Catholicism and Communism that are indicated by the books they turn to

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72 John Spurling, Graham Greene (London and New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 53.

for solace, inspiration and truth. The ex-Mayor continues to read only the early writings of Karl Marx, rather than the later or current Communist literature. In the same way, the Monsignor adheres to the spiritual writings of the medieval mystics, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales and, above these, to the Gospels, rather than to the books of modern theologians, such as Father Heribut Jone on Moral theology, which Father Herrera turns to for guidance. The essential and unbridgable difference between the old faith of Monsignor Quixote and the modern faith of Father Herrera is symbolized in these volumes; the Monsignor's books base faith on a total love for God and man while the young priest's theological works base faith on a systematic and intellectual acceptance of Church doctrine and belief. The Monsignor's words to the ex-Mayor reveal this important difference.

> "You may laugh at Father Jone and I have laughed with you, God forgive me. But, Sancho, Moral Theology is not the Church. And Father Jone is not among my old books of chivalry. His book is only like a book of military regulations. St. Francis de Sales wrote a book of eight hundred pages called The Love of God. The word love doesn't come into Father Jone's rules and I think, perhaps I am wrong, that you won't find the phrase 'mortal sin' in St. Francis's book."(p. 91)

For the Monsignor, his spiritual classics constitute the antiquated books of chivalry whose code of conduct his famous ancestor lived by and defended with his life. The love of God and of men, which these spiritual works profess as the foundation of faith, become for Monsignor Quixote the source of his faith and the code of his life: "...they mean more to me than myself. They are all the faith I have and all the hope"(p. 85). It is this code and faith that lead him into conflict with the Church and the civil authorities, and which compel him to defend his vision of faith from modern profanity and

cold theological dissection. He sacrifices himself in his witness to the true Christian faith of the Church against the abuses of the human element of the Church, and this martyrdom forms the central theme of the novel. As John Spurling aptly summarizes,

> The basic theme of Monsignor Quixote is the same as Dostoevsky's in the 'Grand Inquisitor' section of The Brothers Karamazov, that anyone who goes about the world behaving as Christ and his true followers did is liable to seem mad and dangerous to most people, but especially so to the princes and bureaucrats of the Catholic Church.[73]

Most of the novel is taken up by a discussion, not of the relative merits of Communism and Catholicism, but of the similar nature of faith that underlies belief in either ideology. For Monsignor Quixote, it is the presence of doubt in one's belief, not a complacent and total certainty, that causes faith to become a vital force in men's lives. More than any other aspect of faith, it is this quality of human doubt that is reiterated by the two men throughout their journeys. This preoccupation with doubt in faith begins with the Monsignor's frightening and unforgettable dream of Christ being saved from the Cross by a legion of angels, and thus proving conclusively that He was the Son of God:

> ...of course it was only a dream, but none the less Father Quixote had felt on waking the chill of despair felt by a man who realizes suddenly that he has taken up a profession which is of no use to no one, who must continue to live in a kind of Saharan desert without doubt or faith, where everyone is certain that the same belief is true.(p. 77)

He feels intensely that without doubt there can be no act, or leap of faith. Total certainty in faith, a certainty based exclusively on an intellectual and rational assent to the doctrinal and theological principles of belief, is not a true faith. Like Father Rivas,

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73 Ibid., p. 52.

Monsignor Quixote separates a rational belief in Church dogma from an intuitive faith in God that is based solely on an assent of the will to accept those "things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him".[74] The Monsignor is convinced that the desire to believe is more powerful and necessary in one's life than belief itself; "...knowing that all was true"(p. 206) is a terrifying notion to him. As he explains to his companion, Sancho,

> "I am riddled by doubts. I am sure of nothing, not even of the existence of God, but doubt is not treachery as you Communists seem to think. Doubt is human. Oh, I want to believe that it is all true - and that want is the only certain thing I feel. I want others to believe too - perhaps some of their belief might rub off on me."(p. 205)

The Monsignor's approach to faith therefore is essentially non-intellectual and non-dogmatic, an aspect of faith that is very important to Greene and used extensively in his novel The End of the Affair.[75] There are a number of instances when Monsignor Quixote confuses his explanation of Catholic doctrine or fails to give the correct, orthodox instruction to those who seek his spiritual guidance. Because he approaches God as a person to be loved, trusted and experienced in his innermost being, he cannot bring himself to judge another's soul or to analyse the mystery of the Divine as if He were merely a concept or an idea. His faith, like that of the whisky priest and of Sara Miles, is an emotional and sensuous one, not a cerebral one. As he exclaims to Sancho, "'I tell you it's not a question of belief. I touch Him'"(p. 161). There are times, of course, when Monsignor Quixote longs for an easy faith, one supported

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74 The Jerusalem Bible, 1 Corinthians 2: 9.

75 This idea is developed further in the following chapter of this thesis.

by a complete belief in the black-and-white clarity of doctrine and theology that would enable him to overcome his doubts and to have the unambiguous, orthodox answer for any religious and moral problem.

> Sometimes he envied the certitude of those who were able to lay down clear rules - Father Heribut Jone, his bishop, even the Pope. Himself he lived in a mist, unable to see a path, stumbling...(p. 134)

But he realizes that such a certainty in one's faith breeds an insensitivity and intolerance towards man in his sinfulness. It allows one to judge another in the place of God, but without the mercy and love of God to temper that judgement. In his cloudy, stumbling faith the Monsignor has found the only true spiritual life and communion with God; his faith depends wholly upon his burning love for his God and for his fellow man. When he sadly confesses to Sancho his profound sense of failure as a priest and as a teacher of the faith, resembling the whisky priest in his self-condemnation, his saintly devotion to love that forms his faith is revealed.

> "I am a very ignorant man. There was so much that I was supposed to teach in El Toboso that I didn't understand. I didn't think twice about it. The Trinity. Natural Law. Mortal sin. I taught them words out of textbooks. I never said to myself, do I believe these things? I went home and read my saints. They wrote of love. I could understand that. The other things didn't seem important."(pp. 161-2)

The Monsignor's fundamental Christian faith, manifesting Christ's command of love, is precisely the type of faith that makes him a dangerous example of the Church in the eyes of his bishop. Father Quixote's compassionate love for his fellow man allows him, in the imitation of Christ, to be more accepting and tolerant of those outside of the Catholic faith and of those who are sinners, than the ecclesiastical authorities will permit. The bishop sees the Monsignor's travels with a professed atheist and Communist, his aiding

of a criminal to escape, his stay in a brothel and his viewing of a pornographic film as threats to the established reputation of the Church. As a result, he strips Monsignor Quixote of his sacramental powers, a fate the spiritual knight-errant considers to be "the sentence of death"(p. 207). The bishop never perceives the child-like innocence and love beneath the Monsignor's actions. For Father Quixote, despite his many years of age, is a veritable child of God who remains uncorrupted by his adult experiences. As Richard Kelly writes,

> Father Quixote is more like the innocent children of Greene's earlier works who, free from sexual constraints, express their love simply and directly and who do not experience guilt or anxiety in their relationships with others.[76]

It is this quality of child-like love, so highly regarded by Christ in the Gospels, that leads the generally passive and gentle Quixote into battle for his faith and his Church. The Monsignor cannot stand by idly when the rich "Mexican" Galicians desecrate the statue of the Mother of God with banknotes during the celebration of their parish feast day. To remain silent or indifferent at such a moment of sacrilege would be an act of condonation comparable to that of Pilate's washing of his hands. As the Monsignor had said earlier in the novel: "'...Pontius Pilate was an evil man. The world has almost canonized him because he was a neutral, but one cannot be neutral when it comes to choosing between good and evil'"(p. 72). Thus the Monsignor refuses to be neutral towards this "blasphemy" even though this practice has the approval and "the blessing of the bishop"(p. 228). Against the instincts of his humble nature, he attempts to stop this blasphemous procession of Our Lady through the

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76 Richard Kelly, Graham Greene (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1984), p. 105.

crowded streets, a celebration devoid of true Christian love, with the authority of his title and the force of his convictions. What he fights for is not a doctrine or belief, but the honour and the person of the Virgin whom he loves. "It was love of the Mother of God", writes Victoria Glendinning in her review of the novel, "that impelled Father Quixote to make the protest against sacrilege that was to prove fatal to him...It is love, and not religion or ideology, that is the ultimate act of faith, or of quixotry."[77] When he is reviled and his protests are ignored, Monsignor Quixote begins to tear the money from the statue, an action that incites a riot and that causes him to receive a blow to the head that will lead eventually to his death. Thus the Monsignor has attempted to sacrifice himself in witness to his personal vision of faith out of an undying, though misunderstood, love for the authentic spirit of the Church.

While the Monsignor lies delirious in the Osera Monastery of Trappist monks, he performs one further act of sacrifice - the celebration of the sacrifice of the mass. Without vestments, wine or bread, conditions that recall and exceed the hasty masses said by the whisky priest and Father Rivas, the semi-conscious Father Quixote performs a final pantomimic mass. His mass, the ultimate reenactment of Christ's sacrifice of love for man, parallels the sacrifice of love in his own heart. Following the consecration of the fictitious Eucharist, the atheist ex-Mayor receives the imaginary Host from the priest's fingers out of a deep love and respect for him. Sancho's love for the Monsignor has caused him to suspend, for the moment, his rational and religious disbelief.

> He came forward three steps with two fingers extended, and the Mayor knelt. Anything which

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77 Victoria Glendinning, "A New Book of Chivalry", Sunday Times, 19 September 1982, p. 43.

> will give him peace, he thought...The Mayor opened his mouth and felt the fingers, like a Host, on his tongue.(p. 250)

What the Monsignor has given the ex-Mayor is not merely a Host, real or imaginary, but himself in love and friendship. With the Monsignor's immediate death, following this communion of love shared between two men of disparate faiths, Sancho's life is no longer the same. Father Quixote's death, a martyrdom resulting from his love for God and for the Church he served, and his steadfast belief in the imaginary consecrated Body of Christ, have sowed the seed, not of faith, but of doubt in the ex-Mayor's certain belief in the non-existence of God. As Kelly explains,

> The final fiction in this pantomimic mass carries with it the themes of love and sacrifice, along with doubt and faith. The mayor's life has been changed....he has lost his freedom on the road from El Toboso because he has experienced a revelation of doubt...Both the priest and the Marxist transcend the literalness of their respective faiths and are joined together in charity. The rich ambiguity of faith has been planted like a seed in the mayor's mind, a faith nourished by love...[78]

Once again Greene has demonstrated in his priest an "uneasy faith in the transforming power of love"[79] that is expressed in the Monsignor's total self-sacrifice. His martyrdom, like that of the whisky priest, has become the agent of God's grace and enables the lives of those who come in contact with him to be affected and altered in some essential and profound way. Monsignor Quixote's sacrifice of himself for his faith, his complete abandonment in their friendship, and his final celebration of the sacrifice of the mass, have brought the ex-Mayor to the threshold of faith by instilling in him an undying love for the priest. Sancho's final words, echoing the closing words

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78 Kelly, Graham Greene, p. 110.

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79 Glendinning, Sunday Times, p. 43.

of Maurice Bendrix in The End of the Affair, signal that this love for the Monsignor is the beginning of a love for God. The struggle against faith has begun; God's victory is implied.

> ...and yet love, the love which he had begun to feel for Father Quixote, seemed now to live and grow in spite of the final separation and the final silence - for how long, he wondered with a kind of fear, was it possible for that love to continue? And to what end?(p. 256)

CHAPTER THREE: EROS TO AGAPE: THE SACRIFICE OF HUMAN LOVE FOR DIVINE

> Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner....Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.
> (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship)

> As the whole aim of the soul is love, the seat of which is in the will, the property of which is to give and not receive...the first consideration is not the essential glory which God will bestow upon it, but the entire surrender of itself to Him in true love, without any regard to its own advantage.
> (St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle)

The End of the Affair

Greene's most positive expression of the Catholic faith as a "mysterious and triumphant" force working for good in the lives of believers is found in The End of the Affair (1951).[1] Even more than in the whisky priest of The Power and the Glory or in Scobie of The Heart of the Matter, Greene continues to explore and to develop, in Sarah Miles, the idea that the sinner is, at the core of his being, a saint. This idea is made implicit in the major characters of his previous Catholic novels, but only in Sarah is this concept made explicit. Sainthood, achieved by a total self-sacrifice to the call of faith and in response to the love of God, becomes the subject of

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1 Evelyn Waugh, "The Point of Departure", The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh, ed. Donat Gallagher (London: Methuen, 1983),p. 406.

this novel. Though John Atkins is correct in praising Greene's realistic depiction of the nature of human sexual love[2] and David Lodge is accurate when he writes that Greene, in this novel, "is continually exploring new dimensions and interrelationships of love, hate, and the mixture of love and hate that is jealousy",[3] one must ultimately see that the portrayal of human, carnal love is not the sole end Greene intends for this novel. The overriding concern in the relationship of Sarah Miles and Maurice Bendrix is the way in which human sexual love, eros, can lead one to divine love, agape. As Walter Allen rightly concludes, "the real theme of Greene's novel is not sexual jealousy at all but the working of divine grace".[4]

Since the publication of The End of the Affair, Greene has not utilized the nature of Catholic faith as the central source of conflict in any of his subsequent novels. In a real sense, The End of the Affair is the end of Greene's affair with Catholic fiction. When theological matters appear in his later works, as they notably do in The Honorary Consul, they remain as secondary themes and do not dominate or influence the action of the novel to the extent shown here. The force of conviction and intensity of emotion with which Greene expresses religious faith in this novel, as well as his powerful and compelling portrayal of human love, have never been surpassed or duplicated by any of his subsequent works.

The publication of the novel was generally well received by

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2 John Atkins, Graham Greene, revised edition (London: Calder and Boyars, 1966), p. 198-9.

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3 David Lodge, "Graham Greene", The Novelist at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 110.

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4 Walter Allen, Tradition and Dream: The English and American Novel from the Twenties to Our Time (London: Phoenix House, 1964), p. 206.

critics and reviewers. William Faulkner considered The End of the Affair to be "one of the best, most true and moving novels of my time".[5] Morton Dauwen Zabel lauded the novel, saying that the "three principal characters are perhaps the most subtly drawn and intimately created of any in Greene's gallery". He went on to write that Greene

> ...invites in this novel a comparison with Mauriac's psychic and moral insight. By applying himself to an intimate human conflict and laying aside the melodramatic historical framework of his earlier work, he achieves a substance that brings him to a point of renewal and fresh departure in his fiction.[6]

Evelyn Waugh likewise found that Greene's switch from contemporary melodrama, infused with a spiritual element, to a "domestic, romantic drama", transformed by Greene's sense of religious conflict, to be a commendable new step in the creativity of the artist, especially coming in the middle of a well-established career.[7] But even more than the change in conflict and in the achieved depth of characterization, it was Greene's first attempt at telling his story through a first-person narrator that impressed his contemporaries. As Waugh comments,

> But the great change in this new adventure is the method of telling. For the first time there is a narrator; everything is seen through his eyes with his limitations. Instead of an omniscient and impersonal recorder we have the chief character giving his distorted version; a narrator who is himself in course of evolution, whose real story is only beginning at the conclusion of the book,

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5 Quoted in Harvey Curtis Webster, "The World of Graham Greene", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, ed. Robert O. Evans (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), p. 22.

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6 Morton Dauwen Zabel, "The Best and the Worst", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Samuel Hynes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 46. A similar observation is made by A.A. De Vitis in Graham Greene (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1964), p. 115.

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7 Evelyn Waugh, "The Point of Departure", The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh, pp. 404, 406.

> who is himself unaware of the fate we can dimly foresee for him.[8]

Yet despite the overwhelming praise for Greene's technical achievement, particularly for his variation of the time sequence, a technique he admits was influenced by his constant rereading of Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier,[9] some critics found it difficult to accept the religious elements of divine grace and miracles that were introduced into the novel. Ian Gregor suggests that Greene may have "become involved in a situation which exceeds the novelist's province" as a result, not of his "ambitious theme", but of the manner in which he has depicted the workings of divine grace in human affairs. He contends that the ingress of faith through grace must be demonstrated in concrete human terms. Sarah's transformation by grace and her inner sanctity "must be revealed outwardly" and not merely stated, as was done through the persecution of the whisky priest in The Power and the Glory, but this, claims Gregor, Greene has failed to do.[10] Walter Allen similarly sees the effects of divine grace and Sarah's miracles as unconvincing and as allowing the "parable" to dominate the novel: "an element that is outside literature, in that it cannot be judged in literary terms, takes over".[11] Though the criticisms raised above are to some extent valid, they are incomplete. Bendrix's narration of the novel takes the form of a personal confession. He remembers, analyses and recreates his affair with Sarah and allows the reader to indirectly witness Sarah's spiritual conversion through the

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8 Ibid., pp. 404-5.

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9 Graham Greene, Ways of Escape (London: The Bodley Head, 1980), p. 136.

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10 Ian Gregor, "The End of the Affair", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 124.

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11 Walter Allen, Tradition and Dream, p. 207.

realistic and emotional experiences recorded in her personal writings. Yet where her process of self-sacrifice to God is merely described in her journal, this same process of suffering and eventual exhaustion before the persistent force of grace is demonstrated through the anger, madness, and misery of Bendrix. His transfiguration from an atheist novelist, who believes in the power of art, to a believer, who suspects the limitations of art, is the outward image of Sarah's transfiguration. Their self-abandonments to God must be seen in relationship to each other and in this way the process of self-sacrifice recorded in Sarah's journal is revealed in the evolution of Bendrix. Thus in both Sarah and Bendrix the workings of divine grace are both stated and shown.[12]

The nature of Sarah's carnal love makes her susceptible to the grace of God, which demands her total self-sacrifice in faith. Sarah's love for Bendrix is a selfless love. It is open, trusting, and brutally honest. Her only desire in her love for him is for his happiness and peace and, for this end, she is willing to accept any personal suffering or pain. As she explains to Bendrix,

> "I'm only saying I want you to be happy. I hate your being unhappy. I don't mind anything you do that makes you happy....I want you to be happy, that's all."[13]

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12 A.A. De Vitis also feels that Greene's use of elements of the modern novel allows the spiritual crisis of Sarah and of Bendrix to be realized in a concrete manner. As he writes, "Greene's use of the diary and of the journal allows him not only to characterize his people but also to portray various levels of meaning concerning the spiritual drama enacted....The dream sequences allow Greene to describe in symbolic terms the conflict within her, and the debates allow him to give concrete expression to her struggle. The flashbacks permit him to show the reader the various phases of the development of the action and to portray the state of Bendrix's mind as he describes the affair." Graham Greene, p. 114.

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13 Graham Greene, The End of the Affair (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), p. 65. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.

This total selflessness is seen by Ian Gregor as revealing a "curious amoral indifference" in Sarah,[14] and her "generous acceptance of others" as playing havoc, according to Roger Sharrock, with Bendrix's moral judgements.[15] Despite these claims, this selflessness becomes Sarah's saving virtue and, at the same time, a threat to Bendrix, for he cannot reciprocate such a disinterested love. Sarah's intense, selfless love becomes, as a result, the root of his insecurity and of their frequent arguments.

In some ways this capacity for selfless love resembles the pity of Scobie. She is deeply moved by the suffering and unhappiness of others and is willing to suffer in their places. Following her conversion, she extends her disinterested love in the form of Christian charity to her husband, Henry, pledging to remain with him always though she desperately wants to leave him, and to the rationalist preacher, Smythe, continuing her visits to make him feel useful and kissing his birthmarked cheek despite her revulsion. Yet, unlike Scobie, Sarah realizes that she alone is incapable of securing another's happiness and that one must depend upon God to complete the healing process. Her selfless love for others is therefore mixed with an absolute trust in God. As she writes in her journal,

> Let me think of the strawberry mark on Richard's cheek. Let me see Henry's face with the tears falling. Let me forget me....I don't mind my pain. It's their pain I can't stand. Let my pain go on and on, but stop theirs....If I could suffer like You, I could heal like You.(pp. 146-7)

Sarah's love is also contrasted to the loves depicted in the novels already discussed in that it is not devoid of self-satisfaction

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14 Ian Gregor, "The End of the Affair", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 115.

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15 Roger Sharrock, Saints, Sinners and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene (Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 168.

or self-fulfilment. In her love for Bendrix she is emotionally fulfilled by him as she was, and will be, by no other human lover. She can abandon herself totally to Bendrix in her carnal love, and in this self-abandonment she finds the source of her very identity and of the only meaning and happiness in her life. Sarah is not afraid of the demands her love for Bendrix make upon her. She is happy and willing to give up all of herself in love. During the times when they are together sexually, only the present moment exists for her. Her love, unlike that of Bendrix, is not contingent on past or future loves, and does not preoccupy itself with the fear of the end of their love. Bendrix himself realizes that Sarah's capacity to love, to abandon herself and forget time completely in the act of love, is much greater than his own:

> ..."I've never loved anybody or anything as I do you." It was as if, sitting there in the chair with a half-eaten sandwich in her hand, she was abandoning herself as completely as she had done, five minutes back, on the hardwood floor....She had no doubts, the moment only mattered. Eternity is said not to be an extension of time but an absence of time, and sometimes it seemed to me that her abandonment touched that strange mathematical point of endlessness...When I replied that I loved her too in that way, I was the liar, not she, for I never lose the consciousness of time...(p. 60)

These qualities of selflessness and abandonment in her love condition Sarah's respose to the call of God's grace. It is her willingness to suffer for Bendrix's happiness that causes her to make her sacrificial vow to God. The moment of grace and of her crisis of faith comes on the night when a bombing raid leaves Bendrix unconscious and lying beneath a door Sarah cannot lift. She is convinced that he is dead and there is no direct textual evidence to suggest the contrary. In her desperation, which she later considers to be hysteria, she falls on her knees and prays to a God in whom she

does not believe. Prompted by her love, Sarah instinctively attempts to sacrifice something of herself to God in return for Bendrix's life. She vows to sacrifice her unbelief as payment, but realizes that her conversion entails no personal suffering. Her belief is that one must suffer in a sacrifice in order for God to grant one's prayer. Sarah, then, vows to give up her relationship with Bendrix, to sacrifice her love for him, which is, in effect, offering up the core of her identity and the source of her personal happiness and fufilment to God. This self-immolating vow is an act of free will responding to the call of grace. In her journal, Sarah records her anguished prayer which, like Scobie's, offering to sacrifice his peace to end the suffering of the young dying girl, and like Father Callifer's, offering to sacrifice his faith for the life of his nephew, is immediately granted.[16]

> Maurice was dead. Extinct. There wasn't such a thing as a soul. Even the half-happiness I gave him was drained out of him like blood. He would never have the chance to be happy again - with anybody...Dear God, I said...make me believe. I can't believe. Make me. I said, I'm a bitch and a fake and I hate myself. I can't do anything of myself. Make me believe. I shut my eyes tight, and pressed my nails into the palms of my hands until I could feel nothing but the pain, and I said, I will believe. Let him be alive, and I will believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this, and I'll believe. But that wasn't enough. It doesn't hurt to believe. So I said, I love him and I'll do anything if you'll make him alive. I said very slowly, I'll give him up forever, only let him be alive with a

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16 It is interesting to note the other similarities of Sarah's situation and vow with that of Father William Callifer in The Potting Shed. They both offer to God what they love most in their lives in exchange for the restored life of their beloved. In Sarah's case, her vow to God leads her to faith; in Father Callifer's case, his vow leads to his loss of faith. Yet in both instances a dramatic transformation of the self is begun by their sacrifices. As J.P. Kulshrestha writes, "Both Sarah and Father Callifer struggle painfully against the consequences of their prayers - the imposition of new identities." Graham Greene: The Novelist (London: The Macmillan Press, 1981), p. 119-20.

> chance...and then he came in at the door, and he was alive, and I thought now the agony of being without him starts, and I wished he was safely back dead again under the door.(pp. 116-17)

With her vow, and Bendrix's resurrection, Sarah enters into the "desert" that leads painfully to her conversion to faith and eventual love of God. The concept of the desert was used in an earlier novel by Francois Mauriac, The Desert of Love (1925), to express the total isolation and loneliness one felt in the absence of and inability to love on either the divine or human level. In Greene's novel the meaning is similar. Sarah has been stripped bare of her love and sense of self. She has died to herself in the spiritual sense and, in this desert, she begins her ascent to union with God, passing through the dark night of the soul described by St. John of the Cross.[17]

> We may say that there are three reasons for which this journey made by the soul to union with God is called night. The first has to do with the point from which the soul goes forth, for it has gradually to deprive itself of desire for all worldly things which it possessed, by denying them to itself; the which denial and deprivation are, as it were, night to all the senses of man. The second reason has to do with the mean, or the road along which the soul must travel to this union - that is, faith, which is likewise as dark as night to the understanding. The third has to do with the point to which it travels, - namely God, Who, equally, is dark night to the soul in this life.[18]

The desert, a life without Bendrix to love, was Sarah's greatest fear before this moment of crisis. Her fear was not so much of the end of

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17 In his discussion of the novel, A.A. De Vitis points out Greene's reliance on Eliot's "Ash Wednesday" for imagery and on St. John of the Cross's La Noce Oscura for a description of "the pattern of spiritual awareness". De Vitis also suggests that Greene consciously uses the symbolism of St. John of the Cross, "particularly that of the stair" found in Sarah's account of her dream (p. 151). Graham Greene, p. 108.

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18 "Ascent of Mount Carmel", The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, vol. 1, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1947), pp. 19-20.

their love, but of the loneliness that such an end would entail. She needs the touch and love of Bendrix and of other men to give her a sense of personal worth and to feel secure in the world. She craves human affection to fill the void that God fills in those that believe in Him. As she writes,

> I have always wanted to be liked or admired. I feel a terrible insecurity if a man turns on me, if I lose a friend. I don't even want to lose a husband. I want everything, all the time, everywhere. I'm afraid of the desert....People who believe that [that God loves you] don't need admiration, they don't need to sleep with a man, they feel safe. But I can't invent a belief.(pp. 111-12)

Sarah's greatest fears of loneliness have therefore been realized in her bargain for Bendrix's life. She finds herself lost in the desert without Bendrix to love or a faith in God to rely upon. She maintains her bargain with God not out of belief in Him, but out of the honesty of her character.[19] The desert is only pain for Sarah and she longs to escape from it. She feels that if she doesn't free herself soon from this self-imposed sacrifice, she will perish; and rather than continue to live in such misery, she is willing to destroy herself.

> I said to God, I've kept my promise for six weeks. I can't believe in you, I can't love you, but I've kept my promise. If I don't come alive again, I'm going to be a slut, just a slut. I'm going to destroy myself quite deliberately. Every year I'll be more used. Will you like that any better than if I break my promise?(p. 121)

Sarah wants to hurt God for robbing her of her love, but she no longer finds pleasure in her lust. Carnal lust is no longer an avenue of

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19 As Nathan Scott Jr. writes, "For Sarah, whatever her weakness, is honest, and the vow must be kept, and her problem becomes that of discovering the identity of Him to whom the pledge has been made - together, indeed, with the identity of the one who made the vow." "Graham Greene: Christian Tragedian", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, p. 43.

escape from her loneliness but only a means of self-destruction. Any form of self-punishment from which she derives no personal satisfaction Sarah construes to be a form of mortification, and therefore an acknowledgement of God. But she is not willing to admit her belief in God. Sarah has reach the point in her dark night where she can no longer return to the sensual ways of the past nor enjoy a spiritual faith in God.[20] In her weakness and desperation, she attempts to return to Bendrix and telephones him only to find that he has gone away for a time. Though plainly this could be mere coincidence, Sarah sees his absence as a sign of God's grace. Frustrated by this divine intervention, she realizes that Bendrix, too, is lost in the desert without her and that they are destined never to meet or to find respite from their suffering.

> We were not in touch - in the same desert, seeking the same water-holes perhaps, but out of sight, always alone. For it wouldn't be a desert if we were together. I said to God, so that's it. I begin to believe in you and if I believe in you, I shall hate you. I have free will to break my promise, haven't I? But I haven't the power to gain anything from breaking it. You let me telephone, but then you close the door in my face. You let me sin, but you take away the fruits of my sin. You let me try to escape with D., but you don't allow me to enjoy it....Where do I go from here?(p. 122)

Sarah is moving from the stage of sensual privation in her spiritual journey to the point where she will make her leap of faith. Her self-sacrifice and her suffering have prepared her for this moment. She is driven to the brink of faith by her overwhelming need, not only to love another of whom she has been deprived, but to be

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20 As St. John of the Cross writes, "...when a soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, it also fails to find it in any thing created; for, as God sets the soul in this dark night to the end that He may quench and purge its sensual desire, He allows it not to find attraction or sweetness in anything whatsoever. "Dark Night of the Soul", The Collected Works, vol. 1, p. 373.

loved in return by "somebody who'll accept the truth about me and doesn't need protection", by somebody "who will love a bitch and a fake"(p. 116) unreservedly. Sarah wants to believe in an incorporeal God in order to free herself from and to forget the persistent demands and painful desires of her hated body. Belief in a God that was simply spirit, and one that promised her a similar spiritual existence after her death, would be her ultimate escape from corporeal suffering. She records this hope in her journal.

> I was trying to escape from the human body and all it needed. I thought I could believe in some kind of a God that bore no relation to ourselves, something vague, amorphous, cosmic, to which I had promised something in return...One day I too would become part of that vapour; I would escape myself forever.(p. 133)

Though Sarah wants to believe in a "vapour", the very carnality of her love and nature leads her, despite her contrary intentions, to embrace a God who once took a human form. It is her own body which she despises and wants annihilated, but her love for Bendrix and for his body moves her to wish for the resurrection of the body and the eternal life it promises.

> ...I remembered that they believed in the resurrection of the body, the body I wanted destroyed forever....and I thought, instead of my own body, of Maurice's. I thought of certain lines life had put on his face...of a new scar on his shoulder that wouldn't have been there if once he hadn't tried to protect another...And I knew I wanted that scar to exist through all eternity....then I began to want my body that I hated, but only because it could love that scar.(pp. 133-4)

In her desire to preserve his body, Sarah comes to realize that she cannot believe in a God that is merely an insubstantial spirit. She can believe in, love and hate, only the concrete, physical body. Sarah therefore comes to a belief in God because of the physical body of Christ. Her faith is a materialistic one that proceeds from the

nature of her carnal love. Christ becomes for her the divine flesh and blood that she can hate for taking her human love away. But Sarah soon discovers that her deep hatred of the corporeal Christ is nothing other than a negative sign of her love for Him; the contrary emotions of hate and love in her are complementary and inseparable. Like the relationship of good and evil in the Pinkie-Rose complement of Brighton Rock, love and hate appear in this novel, not as a black-and-white antithesis, but as different shades of the same colour.

> So today I looked at the material body on that material cross, and I wondered, how could the world have nailed a vapour there?...I had said, I hate you; but can one hate a vapour? I could hate that figure on the cross with its claim to my gratitude - "I've suffered this for you" - but a vapour...I looked up at that overfamiliar body, stretched in imaginary pain, the head drooping like a man asleep. I thought, sometimes I've hated Maurice, but would I have hated him if I hadn't loved him too? O God, if I could really hate you, what would that mean?(pp. 135-6)

Sarah's hatred of the body of Christ confirms her belief in God and leads her to a love of Him. God's persistent grace and unending love have worn down her hatred and defeated her will: "...the capacity for anger seems dead in me"(p. 139) she writes, and later she prays, "Dear God, I'm tired"(p. 140). Exhausted by her fight with God, she is ready for her complete surrender to Him. Her suppressed desire to love, sacrificed when she sacrificed Bendrix, has now been transferred to God. He becomes her divine lover and a new, everlasting "affair" has begun. Human sexual love and divine spiritual love correspond very closely in Sarah. She has abandoned herself to God in love much as she did when in the embrace of Bendrix. In an aborted letter to God, Sarah reveals the similar natures of her human and divine loves:

> ...when one loves one feels the need to use the same old ways one has always used. I know I am only beginning to love, but already I want to abandon everything, everybody but you. Only fear and habit prevent me.(p. 62)

Sarah's leap of faith into the love of God requires the same trust and complete surrender that is implicit in her human acts of love. The act of total faith is for Sarah identical to her complete abandonment to Bendrix in carnal love. In Morris West's The Devil's Advocate, the writings of Giacomo Nerone about his love for Nina Sanduzzi precisely describe this kind of human love which leads Sarah to faith.

> The act of love is, like the act of faith, a surrender; and I believe that the one conditions the other....But even in sin, the act of love - done with love - is shadowed with divinity. Its conformity may be at fault, but its nature is creative, communicative, splendid in surrender. ...It was in the splendor of my surrender to Nina and hers to me, that I first understood how a man might surrender himself to God - if a God existed. The moment of love is a moment of union - of body and spirit - and the act of faith is mutual and implicit.[21]

God, as a result, becomes a kind of divine lover who relentlessly pursued Sarah throughout her affair with Bendrix and to whom she now succumbs. The same qualities of love that she used to escape from God, God has used to bring her back to Him. Her last letter to Bendrix, written just before her death, acknowledges that her process of belief and love of God is interwoven with the process of her human love.

> I've fallen into belief like I fell in love. I've never loved before as I love you, and I've never believed in anything before as I believe now....When you came in at the door with blood on your face, I became sure. Once and for all. Even though I didn't know it at the time. I fought belief for longer than I fought love, but I haven't any fight left.(p. 182)

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21 Quoted in J.P. Kulshrestha, Graham Greene: The Novelist, p. 235.

With the hindsight of faith, Sarah realizes that her affair with God had begun much earlier. He was with her in her pain from the moment of her sacrifice and loved her despite her disbelief and her hatred of Him: "...I didn't know it, but You moved in the pain....my disbelief made no difference to You. You took it into Your love and accepted it like an offering..."(p. 138). Even during her love affair with Bendrix before her self-sacrifice, she discovers that God has been present with them all along. God was at the root of their relationship, using their love for each other to lead them, unknowingly, to Himself. "You were there, teaching us to squander, like You taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You"(p. 151). Implied in her statement is the idea that what both she and Bendrix sought in their love for each other was a love of God. Though their love for each other was the greatest love they had ever experienced and one that satisfied fully their human needs, it nevertheless left them inwardly, spiritually wanting. Human love was brought to its furthest limit in their relationship and now, for Sarah, only a divine love can surpass this experience and satisfy her deeper spiritual cravings. This concept of human love preparing one for a love of God was also described by Evelyn Waugh in the love affair of Julia Flyte and Charles Ryder in Brideshead Revisited. The insight Charles attains into his love affair is the same as Sarah's:

> ...perhaps all our loves are merely hints and symbols; a hill of many invisible crests; doors that open as in a dream to reveal only a further stretch of carpet and another door; perhaps you and I are types and this sadness which sometimes falls between us springs from disappointment in our search, each straining through and beyond the other, snatching a glimpse now and then of the shadow which turns the corner always a pace or two

ahead of us.[22]

The "shadow" is, of course, a love of God. Charles Ryder, like Sarah, therefore comes to the brink of faith through his earthly loves. As A.A. De Vitis writes,

> Charles accepts the fact that his love for Julia is the forerunner of a greater love...And this is the explanation of Charles's conversion which at first strikes the reader as unconvincing. He had learned to see and feel with Sebastian; through him he had learned to love Julia. Both loves presage a love of God. And in the love of God he discovers permanence...[23]

In The End of the Affair, Sarah's similar conversion is more believable because of the intensity and concrete realism with which Greene describes her sexual love.

Sarah's sins of the flesh have opened within her the capacity to see and to love God. As in the case of the whisky priest, her sins have paradoxically become the vehicle of her saving grace. Yet it must be made clear that Sarah grows in sanctity, not because of her sins, but because of her sacrifice and her suffering, which purges her of sin. "Sin is not the condition for their virtue", writes Francis Kunkel regarding Sarah and the whisky priest, but rather they grow spiritually "because they have been engulfed by disaster, purified by pain". He adds that it is not "the sensuality and unfaithfulness" of Sarah that Greene extols; it is "her self-control in the face of enormous temptation".[24] More specifically, Greene emphasizes the role Sarah's self-sacrifice and total abandonment to God plays in

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22 Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), p. 303.

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23 A.A. De Vitis, Roman Holiday: The Catholic Novels of Evelyn Waugh (New York: AMS Press, 1971), p. 51.

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24 Francis Kunkel, "The Theme of Sin and Grace in Graham Greene", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, p. 57.

purifying her and in allowing Him to transform her human lusts into divine love and Christian charity. "Her sacrifice", writes Morton Dauwen Zabel, "brings on her the sufferings of a religious atonement...",[25] and this atonement leads her through the desert to a love of God that inspires within her a desire to learn from Him how to love all men. "If I could love You, I'd know how to love them...Teach me to love"(p. 147). Sarah's sacrifice of herself therefore fulfills Léon Bloy's statement that forms the epigraph of the novel, showing that suffering can bring into existence new sources of love in the human heart.

Sarah's faith, as a result, is not an intellectual one but, like that of Monsignor Quixote, an emotional and sensual one that consumes her whole being. Greene has described this type of emotional commitment to faith, based on total trust, to be superior to a rational one, based on an intellectual acceptance, which he claims is the nature of his own faith.[26] As he states, "I should have been pleased if my faith had been like hers [Sarah's]. But I must say in my defence that unlike her I had also to be converted to the idea of Christianity."[27] In the manner of the whisky priest and of Monsignor Quixote, Sarah feels the presence of God and sees his incarnation in others. She does not require rational proofs of His existence. When she visits Smythe, the rationalist, in order to be dissuaded from her sacrificial vow, his intense hatred of God for his deforming

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25 Morton Dauwen Zabel, "The Best and the Worst", Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 45.

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26 This praising of an anti-intellectual faith appears explicitly in three other works by Greene: in the parable told by Querry in A Burnt-out Case (1961), and in Morin's attack on theology in "A Visit to Morin", found in A Sense of Reality (1963), and in the title character of Monsignor Quixote (1982).

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27 Marie-Francoise Allain, The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene (London: The Bodley Head, 1983), p. 154.

birthmark, which lies behind his arguments against the idea of God, only convinces her of His reality. The qualities of Sarah's faith, therefore, are the same as those Greene describes in the faith of a personal friend.

> One comes across people, for instance, endowed with a strange aura. I'm thinking of a friend of mine, a Spanish priest...He has a faculty for bringing people to life. He is not a conventionally pious man, but he is possessed by an absolute faith. When I asked him to describe it, he modestly replied, "I do not believe in God, I touch Him."[28]

Sarah's faith is absolute, but as with the priest described above, both her faith and her holiness are unconventional. Her sainthood is achieved through her complete abandonment to God and by her possession by Him, rather than through an exemplary and disciplined spiritual life. It is this self-surrender and reclamation that enable Sarah to touch, love and heal others in His name.

Though Sarah's conversion is a radical one, in the manner of St. Paul's, her commitment to the demands of her faith vacillate with her human weakness. She is caught in the battle between the desire of the flesh and the desire of the spirit, which are mutually exclusive. The old man and the new man war within her. A reminder of St. Augustine is found in her wanting to be made good and whole by God, but not yet. The pain of such a transformation and purification is too great for her to bear. Sarah wants to imitate Christ in His sufferings and in His love for all men, but she is not ready or strong enough to carry that cross. She knows that if she can love God then she should also love the image of God in the boringness of Henry and the deformity of Smythe, and not only in the body of Bendrix. But this, she admits, she still cannot do.

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28 Ibid., p. 156.

> I imagine I'm ready for the pain of Your nails, and I can't stand twenty-four hours of maps and Michelin guides [with Henry]. Dear God, I'm no use. I'm still the same bitch and fake. Clear me out of the way.(pp. 147-8)

In her weakness, she is aware only of her unworthiness before God and of the pain of His love that burns and purges her like fire. This is her second stage in her mystical journey to God, where she must grow in faith in a series of forward and backward movements between security and doubt, peace and misery, desire for divine love and desire for human sexual love. Later, when she is able to sacrifice herself further and extend her charity to Henry and Smythe, one sees that her love of God has grown. Yet these sacrificial acts of charity do not bring her peace or consolation; she remains subject to the demands of her body. The last entry Bendrix reads from her journal is an exhausted plea to God to allow her to return to the less demanding ways of carnal love.

> I'm not at peace anymore....I'm tired and I don't want any more pain. I want Maurice. I want ordinary corrupt human love. Dear God, You know I want to want Your pain, but I don't want it now. Please take it away for a while and give it me another time.(pp. 151-2)

It has been observed that Greene's Catholic characters are not only "greater sinners", but also that "they are frequently less happy in the state of grace than they are in the state of sin".[29] This is especially true of Sarah Miles. Before her act of faith, she is an uninhibited, happy sinner, unaffected by guilt and able to enjoy the timelessness and pleasure of her carnal love. Following her conversion, she feels constrained, unhappy, and can no longer forget the passage of time or enjoy any sensual pleasure. Her life of faith seems to suggest, as Francis Kunkel writes, that "The nearer she

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29 Kunkel, "The Theme of Sin and Grace in Graham Greene", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, p. 52.

approaches to God, the less joy she takes from the created world and human love.", and that through her, Greene, unlike Pascal, "describes the wretchedness of man with God" rather than without Him.[30] In this novel Greene is concerned with depicting the torment that faith entails in demanding total self-renunciation and self-sacrifice. He had already touched upon this subject in The Heart of the Matter by showing Scobie as suffering beneath a faith he did not correctly understand. The response from lay Catholics and clergy, who had read this novel seeking Greene's guidance in religious matters, confirmed him in the belief that faith was a cross and not a crutch. As he writes in his autobiography,

> ...in the years between The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair I felt myself used and exhausted by the victims of religion. The vision of faith as an untroubled sea was lost for ever; faith was more like a tempest in which the lucky were engulfed and lost, and the unfortunate survived to be flung battered and bleeding on the shore....I had no apostolic mission, and the cries for spiritual assistance maddened me because of my impotence. What was the Church for but to aid these sufferers? What was the priesthood for? I was like a man without medical knowledge in a village struck with plague.[31]

This concept of a troubled faith is presented in the conversions of both Sarah and Bendrix. She exclaims at one point that "I've caught belief like a disease"(p. 182). and Bendrix, later, likens faith to a strong tide that threatens to drown him. In both cases faith is a devastating and overpowering force. It annihilates one's previously held concept of the self and instils a new one in relation to God. Yet one is not justified in simply stating that faith causes Sarah misery without seeing that it is also the source of her greatest

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30 Ibid.

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31 Graham Greene, Ways of Escape (London: The Bodley Head, 1980), p. 253.

joy and comfort. As she writes, "...I wasn't afraid of the desert any longer because You were there" (p. 138), and again later, "But You are too good to me. When I ask You for pain, You give me peace"(p. 151). Her spirit and being are completely fulfilled by God's love for her, to the extent that it overwhelms and oppresses her with its greatness. St. John of the Cross writes that, when one is in contemplation of the Divine as Sarah is, "...sense and spirit, as if beneath some immense and dark load, are in such great pain and agony that the soul would find advantage and relief in death".[32] This is indeed Sarah's case. As she continues to climb in her faith to a closer union with God, she simultaneously longs to remove herself from the world and from her sensual attachments, particularly her love for Bendrix, which still claim her. In her last letter to Bendrix she reveals her desire for death, which, resembling the whisky priest in his vocation, she sees as her only escape from her vow.

> "I love you and I can't see you again. I don't know how I'm going to live in this pain and longing and I'm praying to God all the time that He won't be hard on me, that He won't keep me alive....I pray to God He won't keep me alive like this."(pp. 181, 183)

Though her process of self-sacrifice, renouncing both her desires to love and to experience the sensual pleasures of the body, is one of intense suffering, it is, nevertheless, a process that renews and rekindles the life of her inner spirit and prepares her for the greater, though not fully realized, joy and peace found in her love of God. J.P. Kulshrestha is therefore correct when he declares that "In fact, Sarah feels, in spite of her agony, the delight that St. Augustine knew, the delight of opening oneself up to God in a

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32 "Dark Night of the Soul", The Collected Works, vol. 1, p. 408.

spirit of submission."[33]

Just as Sarah's emotional nature and selfless love condition her for the acceptance of faith, so does Bendrix's nature and love condition him against such an acceptance. His love is egotistical, selfish and untrusting. Bendrix is also a novelist with a sceptical and rational mind that compels him to probe to the source of any thought or emotion. It is this natural instinct to search out the facts, combined with his intense, obsessive jealousy, that causes him to pursue Sarah and her new lover, never suspecting at the time that he is pursuing God. Sarah herself admits that it is Bendrix's relentless searching for the truth that has prepared her for faith.

> "You took away all my lies and self-deceptions like they clear a road of rubble for somebody to come...and now He's come, but you cleared the way yourself. When you write you try to be exact, and you taught me to want the truth...So you see it's all your fault."(pp. 182-3)

Because of the nature of Bendrix's love and mind, his journey to faith will be harder and longer than Sarah's. He will not so readily give up his identity and his love to a God who has been his rival and who has taken his "only deep happiness"(p. 206) from him forever.

Sarah's crisis of faith began with Bendrix's death and her conversion was sealed by his resurrection. In the same way, Bendrix's crisis of faith begins with her death and his acceptance of faith will be challenged by the miracles attributed to her that proclaim her spiritual resurrection and saintliness. Following her death and cremation, Bendrix discovers that Sarah, unknown to herself, was baptised at the age of two into the Catholic Church; but he refuses to believe that the seed of grace planted during her childhood took root in Sarah in her adult life. Later, when he is faced with the

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33 Kulshrestha, Graham Greene: The Novelist, p. 124.

miraculous cures of Parkis's son's illness and of Smythe's deformity, he is furious and desperate to disclaim Sarah's saintly intervention. To this novelist who believes in his rational powers, accepting these occurences as something more than natural coincidences represents a dangerous threat to his understanding of himself and of his art.[34] Terrified by this threat, Bendrix refuses to make a leap into faith and to sacrifice his artist's identity and pride. Sarah must not be the vehicle of God's grace because that would mean even a sinner and atheist like himself could be called to faith by God and made a saint. God has won Sarah's belief and love, but Bendrix is determined not to give Him the added satisfaction of winning his own belief and love. As he sits in his room with the intention of destroying Sarah's journal, which he feels could be used to prove her sanctity, he recalls his apprehension of the self-sacrifice demanded by faith.

> What I chiefly felt was less hate than fear. For if this God exists, I thought, and if even you - with your lusts and your adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell - can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all; if you are a saint, it's not so difficult to be a saint. It's something He can demand of any of us - leap! But I won't leap.(p. 238)

Bendrix sees the temptation to believe as one that can only

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34 Greene revised The End of the Affair for the Collected Edition of his works (London: William Heinemann and The Bodley Head, 1974), changing the birthmark to a nervous skin disease, in order to return to his original intention of giving each "cure" a natural explanation. As he writes, "The incident of the atheist Smythe's strawberry mark...should have had no place in the book; every so-called miracle, like the curing of Parkis's boy, ought to have had a completely natural explanation. The coincidences should have continued over the years, battering the mind of Bendrix, forcing on him a reluctant doubt of his own atheism." Ways of Escape, p. 137. References in this thesis are to the American edition of the novel that was based upon the original English one. For a complete discussion of Greene's revisions see David Leon Higdon, "'Betrayed Intentions': Graham Greene's The End of the Affair", The Library: A Quarterly Journal of Bibliography, sixth series, vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 70-7.

promise suffering and unhappiness. The temptation of God, in his eyes, is an evil one and God Himself is no more than the devil urging him to his self-destruction and loss of identity.

> I know Your cunning. It's You who take us up to a high place and offer us the whole universe. You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap....With Your great schemes You ruin our happiness as a harvester ruins a mouse's nest. I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed.(p. 239)

In his fierce hatred of God he engages in battle with Him as with an enemy. Bendrix does not destroy Sarah's journal, his last physical memory of her, for that would allow God to possess her totally, while he would be left completely without her. Yet his attempt to hurt God and to deprive Him of any spiritual victory only proves His very existence. Bendrix realizes that in his passionate hatred of God, he has given Sarah life and has made his entry into faith: "All right, have it <u>your</u> way, I said to Sarah. I believe you live and that He exists, but it will take more than your prayers to turn this hatred of Him into love"(p. 239). His negative faith, based on a hatred of God, therefore, allows the possibility for a love of God to grow. As it is for Sarah, so it is also difficult for Bendrix to conceive of a hate that does not imply the opposite complement of love. But unlike Sarah, this last step from hating to loving God is a long and tortuous one for Bendrix, for his pride and jealousy condition him against such a complete abandonment.

Before Bendrix can discover his need to love God and to be succoured by Him, he must first sacrifice his egoism and his identity as a novelist, and acknowledge his human imperfectibility. The complete sacrifice of the self required in one's love of God terrifies Bendrix with the pain it entails. His love for Sarah had demanded much of him and interfered with his creativity and his writing. A

love of God, he imagines, would demand all of him until there would be nothing left of himself or of his art. To love God as Sarah did, and to accept His consuming love in return, would be the death of the man and writer.

> If I ever loved like that, it would be the end of everything. Loving you, I had no appetite for food, I felt no lust for any other woman, but loving Him there'd be no pleasure in anything at all with Him away. I'd even lose my work. I'd cease to be Bendrix. Sarah, I'm afraid.(p. 229)

In his continued defiance of God, Bendrix, following in the steps of Sarah, is unwillingly moving towards Him. This process of hatred leading to belief in God, and to an eventual love of Him, underscores the theme that appears in all of Greene's Catholic novels; the sinner, rather than the saint, is brought, despite his contrary intentions and actions, to union with God. Frederick R. Karl explains this phenomenon as follows:

> If one disbelieves in his own perfectibility...he then allows for the ingress of sin that makes him need God. The imperfect man, the one closest to the devil, is, for Greene, precisely the one who is in need of God...The failure, the devilish man, the seeming anti-hero is somehow, unconsciously, approaching God...[35]

This explanation precisely describes Bendrix's situatuion. During his relationship with Sarah, his self-pity and jealous hatred urge him to destroy her love and happiness. He discovers that, in this desire to hurt her, he has become an instrument of the devil, working to end their love. As he perceptively writes:

> I have known so intimately the way that demon works in my imagination....He would prompt our quarrels long before they occurred; he was not Sarah's enemy so much as the enemy of love...If there is a God who uses us and makes his saints out of such material as we are, the devil too may

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35 Frederick R. Karl, "Greene's Demonical Heroes", A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English novel (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), pp. 89-90.

> have his ambitions; he may dream of training even such a person as myself...into being his saints, ready with borrowed fanaticism to destroy love wherever we find it.(pp. 70-1)

Later, when he realizes that God is his rival for Sarah's love, he begins to have doubts about his freedom and his control over his actions and motives. God has also used his evil jealousy in order to bring an end to his carnal affair with Sarah and to prepare her to enter into a higher spiritual affair with Himself. Bendrix, the self-sufficient and rational novelist, suspects for the first time the limitations of his powers to decide his own destiny. He imagines that he himself may be merely a character in a divine plot, a character who refuses to come to spiritual life, but who nevertheless is used by God to bring others to sanctity. The pain he had hoped to inflict upon Sarah, God has used to heal her and to bring her to human completion in the way He had intended and prescribed.

> The saints, one would suppose, in a sense create themselves. They come alive. They are capable of the surprising act or word. They stand outside the plot, unconditioned by it. But we have to be pushed around. We have the obstinacy of non-existence. We are inextricably bound to the plot, and wearily God forces us, here and there, according to his intention, characters without poetry, without free will, whose only importance is that somewhere, at some time, we help to furnish the scene in which a living character moves and speaks, providing perhaps the saints with the opportunities for their free will.(p. 232)

Bendrix originally intended this story to be a record of his consuming hatred for Henry, Sarah and God. Yet by the end of the novel one sees that his hatred is slowly being transformed. He has begun an intimate friendship with Henry, feeling compassion for him in his loneliness, and treating him with charity. Likewise, he discovers that his admiration and affection for Sarah have not diminished but have grown into a love that is more than physical lust:

> ...as I left the church, and seeing her huddled there...I could imagine a God blessing her or a God loving her. When I began to write our story down I thought I was writing a record of hate, but somehow the hate has got mislaid, and all I know is that in spite of her mistakes and her unreliability she was better than most. It's just as well that one of us should believe in her; she never did in herself.(p. 161)

God's "odd sort of mercy" that "sometimes looks like a punishment"(p. 182) is working a final miracle in Bendrix through Sarah's influence and spiritual touch. His suffering in the desert, caused by her sacrifice of him, has transformed his egotism and selfishness. Through his pain, anger, and loneliness, Bendrix is learning how to love disinterestedly. Leon Bloy's epigraph is therefore fulfilled once again. All that remains to be healed in Bendrix is his stubborn hatred of God, and this too is being worn down by the constant temptation of grace. Like Sarah before him, Bendrix is too tired to fight God and to persist in his hatred of Him much longer. His last words, echoing Sarah's own plea, are an exhausted prayer asking God to spare him of the final step to divine love: "O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough. I'm too tired and old to learn to love. Leave me alone forever"(p. 240).

Bendrix, as a result of his exhaustion, finds himself on the threshold of his total self-sacrifice into the love of God. He has travelled full circle from a prideful and sceptical atheism, to a humble and irrational belief in God, and from a passionate hatred of God, to an emotional love of Him that now seems inevitable. His journey to faith and eventual love of God finds an appropriate summation in the words of St. Augustine.

> Thou couldst not hate the Lord thy God, if thou hadst not already found Him; so rejoice, then, that thou hatest Him, for, in hating Him, thou hadst found Him; and, having found Him, thou mayst, in time, by His grace, discover that thou

shouldst love Him, even as he loveth thee.[36]

Thus the spiritual transfigurations of Sarah and Bendrix result from a crisis of faith: a crisis that is initiated by a call of grace demanding their complete self-abandonment to God. Self-sacrifice forms the dominant theme and the major internal conflict of the story of their love affair. Through their sacrifices and the process of their conversions, Greene has described, not only the quality and substance of their human sexual love, but also the similar qualities found in their love of God. His depiction of the nature of self-sacrifice creates the drama and significance of this novel and successfully reveals the modern soul passing through its dark night to a mystical union with God.

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36 Quoted in Nathan Scott Jr., "Graham Greene: Christian Tragedian", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, p. 47.

Conclusion

The acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom invariably arise out of the personal response of Greene's characters to the unique situation which engulfs them. Such a response becomes the climactic act of their human experience of faith as well as the action which unifies all of Greene's themes concerning the destiny and predicament of modern man in a fallen world. Despite the obvious differences in the characters' approaches and responses to faith and to the determining, seemingly fated, circumstances of their lives, there remain a number of dominant ideas and qualities which characterize each sacrificial act. Freedom, vocation, love and the imitation of Christ are recurrent elements in the diverse self-sacrifices of Greene's protagonists and largely constitute his vision of man embodied within his Catholic works. In his portrayal, man emerges as a being divided within himself by the temptations of grace and evil. The inner, spiritual conflict of the "old" man, enchained to sin, and the "new" man, liberated by the love and sacrifice of Christ, is actualized in the realism of the dramatic situation encompassing his characters; a situation in which they are forced to choose between egotism and selflessness, pride and humility, self-idolatry and love of God. Greene's intense dramas of man isolated in an irreligious society ultimately reveal a personal faith that accepts or rejects the Cross as its central reality. This crisis of faith is resolved in the characters' decision of whether to perform the supreme act of human love in self-sacrifice or martyrdom.

Each character's orientation in his relationship to God is demonstrated by his freely chosen actions towards those around him. Ortho-

dox beliefs and the laws of the Church have little or no basis in the faith of Greene's characters while their intuitive sense of the correct act becomes the determining factor of their religious beliefs. Faith is not an intellectual matter for his characters so much as it is a matter of life; their faith expresses itself through their action, not their contemplation. "Orthopraxis and not orthodoxy", writes David Brindley concerning the characters of Greene's Catholic fiction, "is the guarantee of the continuity of God's presence." He continues to explain that

> Man's belief can never be adequate, but by correct practice he can allow the power and the glory to work in him. The basis of faith is not intellectual assent, but the sense of the presence of God confronted in worship; and the God whom we confront is not an abstract idea, but an object made tangible in the mass, in statues, or in rosaries. Practice and the objectifying of God is what brings Sarah to belief in The End of the Affair... and they are undoubtedly the elements which sustain the fugitive priest in The Power and the Glory.[1]

What Brindley fails to acknowledge is that this "correct practice" does not confine itself merely to a ritual worship of God and to inanimate images of God. The right act includes man's worship of God through his relationship with his fellow man, who becomes the most concrete manifestation of God. Therefore, it is not simply the crucifix that brings Sarah to faith but her intense, human love for Bendrix that leads her to a belief in and a love of God. The whisky priest does not encounter God solely through the rite of the Mass and the grace of the Eucharist but through his profound perception of God in the people he serves and in his daughter whom he loves more than himself. In each novel studied in this thesis, the crisis of faith

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1 David Brindley, "Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis in the Novels of Graham Greene", Theology, vol. LXXXVI no. 709, January 1983, p. 35.

leading to each character's physical martyrdom or spiritual self-sacrifice revolves around the love for another. Rose can offer her temporal and eternal life for Pinkie because she has become selfless in her love for him. Pinkie, on the other hand, cannot sacrifice his satanic pride and abandon himself to the growing affection he feels for Rose that threatens his obstinate will and conditioned emotions. Scobie takes his life to protect the people and the God he loves from any further suffering he may cause them. Father Rivas sacrifices his priesthood the better to serve the cause of justice for the people he loves and, later, sacrifices both his anger against the Church and his life by reassuming his priestly vocation for the love of his friends. Finally, Monsignor Quixote gives up his life in defence of the person of the Blessed Virgin out of his complete love for her and for the spirit of the true Church. In each case, love for an individual or group of individuals, and love for God Who takes on the qualities of a living being, become the motives that lead Greene's characters to sacrifice themselves and to enter into the desert of loneliness and suffering where they begin to encounter God. Their sacrificial offerings reveal the mystery of the redemptive powers of faith and love rather than the dogma of Catholicism.

Suffering plays an important role in Greene's vision of the redemption of man and is a necessary condition in man's progress to becoming a fully realized human being. The decision to abandon their pride and will out of love for another painfully separates his characters from the world and the self they have known. This first step to becoming a whole and healed human being places them in the desert of selflessness and faithlessness, apart from man or God, where they undergo an inner transformation. Their proud, self-sufficient natures

weaken in the isolation and loneliness of the desert and become weary in their fight against God. In their pain, Greene's characters finally succumb to faith. But their faith brings them no lasting peace; it brings a sword that severs their attachment to the self and a love that purges them of egotism. Through their love, Greene's protagonists begin their own via dolorosa. Rose, abandoned and alone, struggles inwardly with the temptation of grace to preserve her life and the impulse of her love, which longs to share any eternity with her beloved. Pinkie's entire life constitutes his desert, where he simultaneously longs for the lost peace of his childhood faith and love of God and repels any urge or temptation to repent and humble himself before God, an act of love that would restore him to his lost faith. Scobie also is alone with his inner torment, as are the whisky priest, Father Rivas, Sarah, Bendrix, and the Monsignor. Following their decision to sacrifice themselves for another, they find themselves confronted with the demand for a complete abandonment to God in faith. They are at the moment in their lives where they can truly come alive in their spiritual deaths. The suffering their sacrifices entail becomes the means for their self-renewal. Their crosses become a source of spiritual life. As Marie-Beatrice Mesnet explains,

> Our miseries and all the obstacles we meet in our path must be regarded not as the mere actualization of fate but as problems to be solved for the development of our spiritual personality, as a trial of the capacity of our interior strength to assert itself, and as a way of self-liberation.[2]

Though the circumstances surrounding each character set the stage for this spiritual trial, the choice to enter the desert is always one

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2 Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1972), p. 95.

of free will. The personal response, unlike the situation, is never fated or conditioned. The individual freedom of the characters is not simply one of choice but is, in the Catholic sense, the freedom to accept one's vocation. All these characters are searching for an interior peace in their lives yet they fail to realize that the peace they crave can only be found in God and in accepting their role before Him. This role, or vocation, liberates them from their fallen natures and allows them to reestablish their correct relationship to God. The whisky priest discovers this truth when he realizes that to be a saint is the only thing that counts in life, and that this becomes possible when one accepts one's vocation.

Through their self-effacing love and humility before God, Greene's characters raise themselves from their corrupt states to sanctity. His characters begin to realize their full statures as creatures of God by their acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, yet they do not complete their spiritual development during their lives. Only in death do they reach their full potential as persons and attain true peace. As Mesnet states, "The failure to be a saint, to surrender oneself entirely to the grace of God, to be transformed by it, to attain to one's full personality in a total faith in him, to put oneself beyond the grasp of fate by assuming one's place in time and society, and one's nature in the light of one's vocation", is the "shortcoming" of Greene's protagonists and of all people.[3] Despite this failure, his characters are transformed by their self-sacrifice and martyrdom. Their actions have changed their sin and human weakness to holiness and heroism.

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3 Ibid., pp. 111-112.

An act of love, leading to suffering and humiliation, and resulting in the acceptance of one's vocation and the development of one's personality, is the essential meaning of the acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom described by Greene. Like the Desert Fathers of the Christian tradition, his characters do not seek the direct experience of God in their lives for He is noticeably absent from their personal worlds. Rather, they seek to imitate His love. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" [4] states the first Beatitude of Christ, and Greene's characters enter into this kingdom because they have come to understand that they are nothing in themselves. Their sacrificial acts are acts of love responding to and imitating Christ's selfless, sacrificial love. Like Him, they have assumed responsibility for another and, in their complete surrender to love, they find meaning and purpose in their lives. As Robert Evans writes, "Greene's ethical teaching has been essentially that in the milieu in which modern man finds himself the only possible solution is imitatio Christi." [5] Self-sacrifice and martyrdom become the source of man's sanctity and redemption in Greene's fallen fictional world. These acts are the evidence of God's grace, which appears in those characters who seem most to have failed before man and God.

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4 Matthew 5: 3.

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5 Robert O. Evans, "Introduction", Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations, ed. Robert O. Evans (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), p. xi.

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